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T H E

# H I S T O R Y

O F

# A G A T H O N,

BY MR. C. M. WIELAND.

Translated from the GERMAN Original,

W I T H

A PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

— Quid Virtus & quid Sapientia possit  
Utile proposuit nobis exemplar —

V O L. III.



L O N D O N,

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C O N T E N T S  
O F  
VOLUME THE THIRD.  
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Page 98. Line 2. *dele the full stop after Europe,*  
*and insert a comma.*

- 140. — 11. want, order, *read* want of order
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# A G A T H O N.

## B O O K VIII.

### C H A P T E R I.

*Preparatory to the following.*

THE state of a poet's fancy, the  
fidelity of a mistress; and the  
friendship of a *Hippias* are, per-  
haps, three of the most uncertain things  
in nature. The favour of the great may,  
perhaps, be considered as the fourth: it  
is generally lost as easily as acquired;  
and has also this resemblance to the fa-  
vours of certain nymphs, that whoever  
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has been so imprudent as to partake of either, must usually purchase his fleeting dream of pleasure with lasting pain.

HIPPIAS called himself the friend of the beautiful *Danae*, and was considered as such by her ; this mutual friendship was founded on an acquaintance of more than twelve years. To this we may add the connection naturally subsisting between persons of wit and refined manners, the similarity of their turn of thoughts and inclinations ; probably too, the peculiar privileges which *Hippias* was generally supposed to have long enjoyed with the fair *Danae*. These several circumstances had produced that kind of confidence between them, which by a mistake peculiar to people of the world, is considered as friendship, and is in reality the only friendship of which they are capable. This, however, is in general merely a mechanical effect of accidental circumstances, and is in fact nothing more than a tacit consent in the parties to continue their

their attachment, so long as it may be convenient to each other. Hence it usually ceases the instant it is put to any kind of trial, which interferes with the interests of self love.

THE beautiful *Danae*, who had a much better heart than the Sophist, behaved to him without reserve, as she had not the least doubt of the sincerity of his friendship. 'Tis true, since love had wrought so surprising a change in her character, he had lost a considerable share of her esteem, as well as of her confidence: the more *Agathon* gained, the more must *Hippias* necessarily lose: but this was produced in so natural and imperceptible a manner, that she herself was scarcely sensible of the change, or had only an imperfect idea of it. She was probably so little aware of this circumstance, and was so far from entertaining any apprehension that the Sophist would see more deeply into her heart than she herself did, that she never thought of using any precaution

with him. A proof of this is, that instead of prejudicing her lover against him, she rather sought every opportunity of raising *Hippias* higher in his esteem. The particular attention the Sophist had for some time paid to his behaviour, seconded her endeavours so effectually, that *Agathon* began to form a more favourable opinion of his character, and insensibly admitted him to such a share of his confidence, that our hero no longer scrupled to enter into a familiar discourse with him concerning the interests of his heart.

OUR lovers fell therefore as carelessly and imprudently into the snare *Hippias* had laid for them, as he could possibly desire; nor did they imagine, that he could have any intention of dissolving a connection which in some measure was formed by himself. This inattention might, perhaps, appear the more blameable, as they were no strangers to the principles that influenced his conduct. But it is an observation we have opportunity

nity of making every day, that generous dispositions cannot possibly avoid being imposed upon, by men of the character of our Sophist. Let them be ever so well acquainted with their turn of thought, let them have ever so many proofs that those persons, whose inclinations and actions are directed solely by self-interest and passion, are not capable of any truly virtuous conduct ; yet it is impossible for them so accurately to trace all the folds and windings of their heart, that some secret malice shall not lurk unnoticed, till it breaks out into action. *Agathon* and *Danae*, for instance, were sufficiently acquainted with the character of the Sophist, to be convinced, that as soon as his interest came in competition with their love, he would not hesitate a moment to sacrifice the duties of friendship to his own advantage. For what are moral obligations to a *Hippias* ? On the other hand, they could not conceive what advantage *Hippias* could propose to himself,

in alienating their affections from each other, and this made them more secure. He had in reality no advantage in this, nor was it properly his design; but he had an interest in pursuing a plan, which from the nature of *Agathon's* character, must necessarily produce this effect, and this was an interest of which our lovers had no suspicion.

IN the fourth book of this history, we have laid open the views which induced the Sophist to introduce our Hero to the acquaintance of the fair *Danae*. The plan was well concerted, and according to the suppositions on which it was founded, could not possibly miscarry, if any supposition might be depended upon, when love is of the party. In this instance, however, it happened to *Hippias* as it commonly does to all projectors, he thought of every circumstance, except that single one which frustrated his intentions. How indeed could he imagine, that a *Danae* would be capable of losing

losing her heart with a platonic lover? A dispassionate philosopher might have been affected by this without being angry, but such philosophers are rarely to be met with. *Hippias* found himself deceived in his expectations; his expectations were the result of certain conclusions; his conclusions were deduced from his principles; and these were collected from the whole system of his ideas, which we know every philosopher considers, at least, as the half of his dear self. How was it then possible that he should not be angry? His vanity was piqued, and *Agathon* and *Danae* had been the offenders. He was well assured, that they could not have had any design to offend him, but this consideration was of little consequence to a *Hippias*. It was sufficient that his resentment was excited; it must vent itself upon some object, and it was not to be supposed that he would be angry with himself. Men of his disposition would sooner see half the world

perish, than confess that they have been mistaken: it was, therefore, natural that he should think of indemnifying himself by the pleasure of revenge, for the loss of that satisfaction he had flattered himself with, in the expected and wished for reformation of our Hero.

AGATHON loved the fair *Danae* even after the height of his rapture was over, because she still appeared to him the most perfect creature he knew. What an understanding! what goodness of heart! what uncommon talents! how charming was her conversation! what a variety of excellencies and attractions! How greatly in her favour was the recollection of every moment, from the time he first beheld her, to the instant when overpowered by sympathetic love, she had rewarded his affection with happiness! In a word, all he knew of her was to her advantage, and he was ignorant of every thing which could have lessened his esteem.

WE

WE may readily imagine, that *Danae* would not have been so imprudent as to betray herself. It is true, in return for the confidential narrative *Agathon* had made of his life, she could not avoid giving some account of her own ; but we very much doubt, whether she thought herself obliged to observe the same conscientious regard to truth. Can we indeed be certain, that *Agathon* himself with all his frankness, had not like a judicious painter or poet, suppressed some circumstances, which he probably foresaw would spoil the good effect of the whole piece ? What assurance have we that the seducing Priests had obtained nothing more from him, than what he confessed ? At least some of our readers (who, perhaps, forget that they are no *Agathons* themselves) may suspect some affectation in the great indifference our hero discovers on a certain occasion to charms, which they look upon as sufficiently attracting, even in his own description. In fact, let

a man be ever so bashful, or ever so Platonic, a fine woman who has resolved to try the power of her charms upon him, herself inspired by the god of love, and what is still worse, a Priestess—in an attitude so inviting, with such black eyes, with so beautiful a bosom—is indisputably a dangerous sight for any one, who is not, as *Phryne* expressed it, a meer statue. Poetry, indeed, must be destitute of those magic powers, which have hitherto been ascribed to it, if in such a situation, the reading of that scene in the *Iliad*, which describes the deception of *Jupiter* by the girdle of *Venus*, had not given a double force to the natural effects of an object so very similar. However that be, it is yet certain, that *Danae* in the narrative of her life, had paid a greater regard to the laws of propriety and decency, than to the obligations of an exact historic truth. She, therefore, made no scruple sometimes to embellish one circumstance, sometimes entirely to omit another, according

cording to the particular view she had upon her hearer. Her narrative was for him alone, not for the world ; she might, therefore, not think herself so much bound by those strict rules, which the world in vain prescribes to every historian. Not that she meant entirely to conceal from him any principal incident of her life, or instead of real facts, to deceive him by fictitious adventures. She told him every thing ; but there is a certain way of omitting what might make an unfavourable impression ; a great deal depends upon the turn ; a single trifling circumstance gives an event so very different an appearance, that we may be guilty of many striking deviations from historic truth, without making any remarkable change in the material part of the narrative. An observation, which, by the way, makes those who write memoirs of themselves, (not even *Xenophon*, *Marcus Antoninus*, nor the honest *Montaigne* himself excepted) more suspicious to us, than any other

class of historians, because they are so deeply interested in them.

UPON this principle the fair and prudent *Danae* had neither concealed from her lover her education in *Aspasia's* family, her acquaintance with *Alcibiades*, nor the flattering conquest she had made of the prince *Cyrus*. All these and several other less brilliant parts of her story either were, or might, at least, by that address which procured her the name of the second *Aspasia*, have been told in such a manner, as to have had the appearance of being to her honour. But with respect to those passages, on which she believed that all the embellishments of art would be thrown away, she prudently determined to be silent: because those passages either in themselves, or in regard to the singular taste of our hero, could not please in any dress, in any light, or in any shape that might be given them. Hence it was, that our hero still continued in the opinion that he was the first person she had

had attached to herself by favours of such a kind, as she had bestowed upon him. This was an error so necessary for a man of his refined sentiments, that without it, all the perfections of his mistress would have been insufficient to have secured his affection, even for a moment. To undeceive *Agathon* in this particular, was the most cruel stroke that could be given to his love and to the beautiful *Danae*; by this the Sophist hoped to be revenged of both at once, and this idea alone filled his malicious heart with joy. He waited, therefore, only for a convenient opportunity, which is seldom wanting to assist the execution of a bad design.

WHETHER this circumstance should be ascribed to the interposition of some evil Daemon, or whether it be owing to this, that wickedness is in its nature more busy and active than goodness, is a question we leave to the discussion of others. To which ever of these causes it may be imputed, the consequence naturally flowing

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ing from this truth confirmed by daily experience would be, that evil would increase in a continued progression, and in this sublunary world at least, would in the end overpower the good. But, general experience equally proves, that the contrivances of bad men, however successful they may be, commonly fall short of their aim, and promote the interests of virtue by those very schemes and artifices, which are intended for its destruction.

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## C H A P. II.

*Treachery of Hippias.*

A MONG other qualifications which rendered the character of *Danae* estimable, she had that of being an excellent friend. However indifferent she might have been to the charge of inconstancy in love, till the time that *Agathon* took

took possession of her heart, she had always been firm and constant in her friendship. She loved her friends with a tenderness, which might easily be construed by those who judge only from appearances, into a more interested passion ; as it equalled the efforts of the strongest affection, whenever called upon to relieve the distresses of a friend. In such circumstances, there was not a single pleasure she would not have sacrificed to the duties of friendship.

AN incident of this kind, the circumstances of which have no connection with our history, obliged her to leave *Smyrna* for a few days. *Agathon* could not accompany her, and the affectionate *Danae*, satisfied with the proof he gave her of his affection, in the anxiety he expressed at her departure, consoled herself with the thought, that this short separation would make him more sensible of the value of his happiness, than an uninterrupted enjoyment of it. Secure in the possession of  
his

his heart, she the more earnestly recommended to him, during her absence, to partake of all the pleasures which the rich and voluptuous *Smyrna* could procure, as she was confident that she had nothing to fear from such dissipations.

BUT *Agathon* had already begun to lose all relish for such amusements. How lively, how various, how enchanting soever they might be, yet were they not capable of engaging a soul like his for a long time. Considered as business, they are only so to those who are fit for no other; as pleasures, they cease to be such, when they lose the charms of novelty. The more lively they are, the sooner are they succeeded by satiety and disgust: nor is it in the power of all their apparent variety, to conceal that sameness arising from a constant use of them, and which at length renders them irksome even to the most worthless class of men. The absence of *Danae* wholly deprived them of the only charm they yet retained for *Agathon*, the satis-

satisfaction of seeing her partake of them. He, therefore, spent almost this whole interval of time in a retirement, to which the active life he had led at *Athens*, and the voluptuous ease he had enjoyed at *Smyrna*, had for some years made him a stranger. The effect produced in him by this, may be compared to what a man feels, who out of a well illuminated room comes suddenly into the dark. Though his soul was crowded with ideas, yet he felt a void within, which he ascribed to the absence of his mistress. He felt her absence, but did not conceive that he should have missed her less, had not his mind been enervated by constantly indulging a voluptuous indolence. The first days glided away in a kind of tender melancholy, which was by no means unpleasing to him. *Danae* was almost the only object that engaged his soul retired within itself; or, if the retrospect of former times presented to his view the image of his dear *Psyche*, or the brilliant scenes

of

of his republican life, it contributed only to set in a still stronger light, the merits of the incomparable *Danae*, and the tranquil felicity of a private life, devoted solely to love, to friendship, to the Muses, and the Goddesses of festivity. His love was reanimated ; it diffused that enlivening warmth through his whole being, which had produced so complete a harmony between the impulses of his heart and those of his imagination. He sketched out the plan of a life, which, (thanks to his poetical fancy) seemed rather to be that of a God, than of a mortal. In this imaginary heaven of happiness and smiling joy, *Danae* appeared with superior brightness. Transported with these pleasing dreams, he resolved to unite his fate for ever with her's : he considered her as worthy to render that *Agathon* happy, who would have been too proud to accept the most splendid fortune from the hands of a king. This conclusion, which to a thousand other men,

would

would have been a very equivocal proof of love, was in fact from his turn of thought, an indication of the highest degree of it.

IN such a disposition of mind, so favourable to the designs of *Danae* was our hero, when *Hippias* paid him a visit, to complain in a friendly manner of the retired life he led since *Danae's* departure. *Danae*, said he, in a rallying tone of voice, should be satisfied with keeping the amiable *Callias* to herself when she is present, but to withdraw him from all society in her absence also, that is too much, and must in the end excite a general confederacy of all the fair ladies in *Smyrna* against her. *Agathon* answered this raillery in the same tone; insensibly the discourse became interesting, though it did not appear that the Sophist had any particular design in view. He took pains to convince his friend, how much he was to blame to withdraw himself from society, in order to entertain the *Dryads* with his passion,

passion, and charge the *Zephyrs* with sighs and messages to his absent mistress. He described to him in the most engaging colours, those pleasures he deprived himself of, and did not omit reminding him, in how ridiculous a light he must appear in the eyes of every fair one, from the singularity of his humour. A *Callias*, in his opinion, should not have been satisfied with a single conquest, how brilliant soever it might be: he, to whom his superior perfections gave so just a claim to set no bounds to his ambition in this path, and, who to conquer, need only appear. He confirmed the truth of this flattery, by mentioning the particular pretensions which some of the most celebrated beauties of *Smyrna* made to him. From the Sophist's account, it depended only upon *Agathon* to satisfy at the same time his vanity, his curiosity, and his propensity to pleasure, and to render his happiness as varied, as the most wanton imagination could possibly wish.

To

To all these rhapsodies *Agathon* had but one answer—his love for *Danae*. The Sophist thought it insufficient: the same reasons which had occasioned his attachment to *Danae*, ought to make him equally sensible to the charms of other beauties. A change of objects constituted, in his opinion, the supreme happiness of love. He supported this position, by a very lively detail of the particular pleasures which attend the conquest of each particular class of beauties: the ignorant and the experienced, the witty and the simple, the fair and the homely, the coquet, the prude, the virtuous, the devotee—in short, every single female character, employs the taste, the imagination, and even the senses (for as to the heart, that was out of the question) in its own peculiar manner.—Each of these requires a new plan, creates new difficulties, and makes us happy in a different way. From these fine reflections he concluded, that it was inconceivable how a man,

man, who could command such a variety of pleasures, should reject them, merely to restrain himself to the uniform gratification of one single passion, which he invariably pursued with romantic attachment.

AGATHON granted, that to an indolent voluptuary, who made such kinds of amusements the sole business of his life, such a change as the Sophist recommended must be perfectly agreeable. But, at the same time he maintained, that men of this cast were wholly ignorant of the nature of true love. He then resigned himself entirely to the enthusiasm of his heart, and gave the Sophist a description of what he had felt for the fair *Danae*, from the first moment he saw her, to the present hour. He described so sincere, so refined, so perfect an affection, and expatiated with such an enthusiastic rapture upon the excellencies of his mistress, the sympathy of their souls, and the more than human delight he enjoyed in her

love,

love, that nothing but the malice of a *Hippias*, or the friendly severity of a *Mentor*, could have been capable of making him forego so enchanting a delusion.

THE charms of the beautiful *Danae*, replied the Sophist, are too well known, and her merits, in this particular, so generally acknowledged, even by her own sex, that *Lais* herself, who had the reputation of making the noblest of the *Greeks* and princes of foreign nations vie with each other in the purchase of her favours, would be ridiculous, if she were to attempt to put herself in competition with her. But, that she should ever have the honour of inspiring a passion so respectable, so metaphysical, so inconceivably sublime—that this miracle, the only one she had not hitherto wrought, should be reserved to the power of her charms—this is, indeed, what no man could ever have dreamt of, without laughing at the thought himself.

OUR

OUR Hero, who had already been highly scandalized at the malicious comparison with the Corinthian *Lais*, now lost his temper entirely. With all the warmth of a lover injured in the object of his adoration, he reproached the Sophist for the equivocal manner, in which he had presumed to speak of such a person as *Danae*, and his indignation as well as confusion could not be equalled, when he saw that the Sophist only answered him by a satirical sneer.

IT is so easy to foresee what must be the conclusion of this scene, after what we have already observed concerning the designs of the Sophist, that we might leave it to the reader's own imagination. On the one hand, impatient questions—on the other, evasions and artful applications; till at length *Hippias*, after much conversation (impelled by the irresistible power of his pretended friendship for *Agathon*) suffered the secret of the beautiful *Danae's* real situation to be forced from

from him, together with those anecdotes which we (however innocently) discovered to our readers in the third chapter of the fourth book.

WE have already observed, how much depends upon the views of the relater, in the narrative of any event, and how different the applications may be, by varying the circumstances. *Danae* told her story with the innocent intention of pleasing. She naturally viewed her conduct, her foibles, and even her failings, in a more favourable (and, if we may say the truth) in a truer light than the world ; which, on the one hand, is unacquainted with all those trifling circumstances that justify us, or at least extenuate our faults ; and on the other hand, is malicious enough, for the sake of greater diversion, to overcharge the picture of our follies with a thousand strokes, by which, indeed, the portrait is made less exact, but consequently more amusing. Unfortunately for our fair one, the designs of *Hippias*

required that he should carry this infamous art of giving an odious turn to any event, as far as the laws of probability could possibly admit.

DURING these discoveries, our hero appeared more like a statue, or a dead man, than himself. Cold shiverings and burning heat alternately ran through his whole frame : his breast at once beset with the most contrary passions, he breathed with such difficulty, that he must soon have fainted, had not one of those passions suddenly gained the ascendent, and by the most violent effort given vent to his oppressed heart. The light in which *Hippias* represented his Goddess, made so unpleasing a contrast, with that in which he had been used to consider her, and the thought that he had been so greatly deceived was so insupportable, that it was not possible for him to give credit to the Sophist. The whole storm, that rose within his soul, broke forth therefore against the traitor. He called him a false friend,

friend, a slanderer, a worthless villain—invoked all the avenging Deities against him—swore, that if the accusations with which he dared to fully *Danae's* virtue, were not grounded upon the most undeniable proofs, he would exterminate him as a monster not fit to live, and expose his detested carcase, unburied, as a prey to the birds of the air.

THE Sophist viewed this storm with the tranquillity of a man well acquainted with the nature of the passions: with a composure equal to that of him, who considers securely from the shore the tumultuous roaring of the waves he has fortunately escaped. A look of compassion, accompanied with a malicious smile, which left no room to doubt of it's meaning, was all he opposed to the indignation of our exasperated lover. Here *Agathon* paused: a horrid doubt suddenly came upon him. Speak, barbarian! exclaimed he; speak! prove thy detested accusations as clear as the sun, or confess

that thou art a traitorous wretch, and die with shame!—Art thou in thy senses, *Callias*? replied the Sophist, with that infamous coolness, which on such occasions is peculiar to triumphant malice—recollect thyself a little, and as soon as thou art able to hear reason, I will speak.

AGATHON was silent, for what can he say, who is uncertain what he shall think?

REALLY, continued the Sophist, I cannot conceive what reason thou canst have to act the part of the furious *Ajax* with me. Who talks of accusations? Who impeaches the beautiful *Danae*? Is she then less amiable, because thou art neither the first who has seen her, nor the first who has found her susceptible of tender impressions? What extravagancies are these! Believe me, any other but thyself would have thought that the sight of her alone, was sufficient to confirm the account I have given of her. Her very look is a proof. But, thou requirest

a stronger, thou shalt have it, *Callias*. What wilt thou say, if I myself have been one of those, who can boast of having experienced the effects of the beautiful *Danae's* sensibility?—Thou? exclaimed *Agathon*, with an astonishment that implied disbelief, and was not at all flattering to the Sophist's vanity. Yes, *Callias*, I, retorted he; I, as thou here beholdest me, might be better qualified ten or twelve years ago, to obtain the favour of a fine woman. Thou thinkest, perhaps, that I am in jest; but I am convinced, that thy Goddess herself has too much spirit to deny, if thou wilt question her properly, the truth of what all *Smyrna* can testify.

HERE the inhuman wretch, totally unconcerned at the situation into which his vain boastings had thrown the miserable *Agathon*, proceeded minutely to describe the happiness he pretended to have enjoyed in the arms of the fair *Danae*, (Heaven knows on what foundation) with

such an air of truth, and with such vivacity, as almost drove his hearer to madness. It is passed, interrupted *Agathon*, with an emotion so animated, that he appeared, at that instant, to be something more than man.—It is passed ! O virtue, thou art avenged !—*Hippias*, under the smiling mask of friendship, thou hast pierced me through with a poisoned dagger—but I thank thee—thy malice has done me a much greater service, than thy friendship could : it opens my eyes, it points out to me at once in the object of my esteem and confidence, in the idol of my heart and in my supposed friend, two of the most despicable objects that ever have defiled my sight. Gods ! the mistress of a *Hippias* ! Is it possible for any thing to be more dishonourable than this ? With this apostrophe, he cast the most contemptuous look that ever glanced from mortal eye upon the disappointed Sophist, and departed.

C H A P.

## C H A P. III.

*Consequences of the preceding.*

THE human soul is, probably, susceptible of no pain more severe, than that which arises from a necessity of despising the object of our tenderest affections. Language itself is too weak to express the torture which so violent a shock occasions in a heart exquisitely sensible: we therefore chuse rather to confess that we find ourselves unequal to the task of painting the tumult of the passions, which raged in *Agathon's* mind for some hours after this cruel explanation, than by a cold description, to betray both our presumption and inability.

THE first thing he did, as soon as he had recovered himself, was to exert his utmost efforts to persuade himself that *Hippias* had deceived him. Was it too much to entertain the worst idea of so highly infamous a character, as the So-

phist's then appeared to him ? Of what validity could such a witness be against a *Danae*?—Or rather, how powerful an apologist hadst thou, fair *Danae*, in the heart of thy *Agathon*! Could *Hyperides* himself, though he was sufficiently eloquent to persuade the Athenians of the innocence of a *Phryne*, have said any thing stronger and more plausible in thy defence, than *Agathon* said to himself?—Probably reason alone would have been overcome by the sophistical eloquence of love, had not jealousy intervened and turned the scale ; and among all the passions, there is none, which so easily changes probability into reality. In the doubtful light which this passion spread over his soul, conjecture was changed to probability, and probability into certainty ; as if, with the refined delicacy of a *Julius Cæsar*, he had found *Danae* guilty, merely because she was suspected. He compared her own narrative with the account *Hippias* had given of her, and now  
thought,

thought, since distrust had entirely taken possession of him, that he discovered a hundred traces in the former, which confirmed the truth of the latter. Here she must have given an artful turn to one circumstance, there (as he seemed to recollect) she had been embarrassed what to make of another, which had escaped her unawares.

WITH the same degree of partiality he surveyed her whole behaviour towards him. How clearly did he now fancy to perceive, that from the first instant she had formed designs upon him ! A thousand trivial incidents, which were then perfectly indifferent to him, appeared now to have had a secret meaning. He recollect ed, compared, and combined every circumstance, till at last he firmly believed, that every thing which had happened to him from the first visit he paid her with *Hippias*, to the time of his entrance into her service, had been the consequence of a plan previously con-

certed between her and the Sophist. How greatly did this idea embitter every favour she had shewn him ! How entirely did it deprive all her actions of that beauty and grace, which had so much enchanted him ! He now saw in this imaginary original of every ideal perfection, nothing more than an artful courtezan, who, by a superior skill in the practice of captivating the affections, had taken advantage of his innocence. How despicable did those marks of her favour now seem, which he had prized so highly, while he considered them as the overflowings of a heart devoted solely to him ! How contemptible those joys, which in each happy hour of enchantment, had raised him to a state of equality with the Gods ! How enraged was he now at his own folly, that he had suffered himself to be caught in so evident and palpable a snare!

THE image of the amiable *Psyche* could not have presented itself to him at a more unseasonable time for *Danae*, than

at this instant ; but it was natural that it should present itself ; and how dazzling was the light in which she now appeared to him ! What additional splendor did she receive from the eclipsed merits of her unfortunate rival ! Heavens ! how was it possible, that the mistress of an *Alcibiades*, of a *Hippias*, of any man to whom fancy might chance to lead her, should be capable of extinguishing that innocent affection for *Psyche*, whose chaste embraces were so far from endangering his virtue, that they had given it new life and vigour ?—He carried on the comparison as far as it could go. Both had loved him, but what a difference in their manner of loving ! How different was that night,—a night he could not now recollect without horror,—in which *Danae*, after having exerted all her charms, employed every thing which the most artfully seducing skill could invent, joined to the magic powers of music to intoxicate his senses, and dissolve his whole being in

voluptuous desires, had thrown herself with engaging forwardness into his arms.—What difference between that, and those elysian nights, which, in the company of his dear *Psyche*, had passed away, as a single moment in heaven, in the pure delights of unembodied spirits.—Poor *Danae*! even her personal charms lost by this comparison that superiority which the most partial prejudice could not refuse them. This image of *Venus*, at the sight of whom his enraptured soul had been dissolved in pleasure, when compared with the virgin modesty of the young *Psyche*, was now degraded in his captious imagination to the lascivious beauty of a Bacchanalian, fitter to excite the fury of a drunken Satyr, than those tender transports, he was now ashamed to have lavished upon her in the inexcusable infatuation of soul.

OUR virtuous female readers, who have doubtless lamented the fall of our hero, not without an honest indignation against

against the refined meretricious arts of the beauteous *Danae*, will sincerely rejoice to see the honour of virtue, and in some degree, the interest of their whole sex, revenged on this fair seducer. We ourselves share this pleasure with them, and yet, with their permission, we cannot help observing, that *Agathon*, in the comparison which he made between *Danae* and *Psyche*, shewed a severity we do not entirely approve; how pleased soever we may be to see him get the better of a passion, a longer continuance of which, would have made it impossible for us to give this third volume of his history.

HOWEVER blameable *Danae* might be on account of her weakness for our hero, yet it is evidently unjust to condemn her, because she was not a *Psyche*, or to speak more precisely, because in similar circumstances, she had not conducted herself exactly as *Psyche* had done. If *Psyche* was more innocent, this was less to be considered as a merit in her, than as a physical

physical qualification, the natural consequence of her youth and situation of life. *Danae*, probably, was equally innocent, when with all the simplicity of a country girl of fourteen, she danced to the flutes at the Athenian festivals, under the inspection of her brother ; or when she was hired by *Alcamenes* to sit as a model of the rising bosom of a *Hebe*. Was it her fault that she had not been educated at *Delphos* ? Or, that the first affections of her youthful heart declared themselves in favour of an *Alcibiades*, and not of an *Agathon*?—*Psyche's* love, we grant, was more innocent, but still love is always the same in its effects. It extends its claims till it gets in possession of all its rights, and frankness and inexperience are the least able to withstand its pretensions. It was fortunate for the tender innocence of *Psyche*, that her nightly interviews were interrupted, before that spiritual kind of sensual enthusiasm, in which they had both begun to make so considerable a profi-

ency,

ency, had risen to its greatest height. Probably, in a few days, or more, if you please, but then we may say, certainly, these harmless children would have proceeded from one innocent overflowing of the heart to another, from one expression too weak to describe their exquisite sensibility, to another, till at last, to their great astonishment, they would have found themselves where nature expected to bring them ; and then what would have become of the most essential privileges of innocence ?—Another circumstance, in which *Pfyche* had happily the advantage over *Danae*, was this, that her lover was as innocent as herself, and notwithstanding all his sensibility, had not the most distant thought of ensnaring her virtue. Do we know how she would have behaved, if it had been put to the trial ? She would have resisted, of that there is no doubt, but let us add, as long as it would have been possible for her : For it is not to be imagined, that she would have had

courage

courage enough to fly from him, and never see him more. She would, at last, then have been surprized by the soft delusions of love, however she might have retarded the instant of her defeat. It may be said, that supposing even she had been overcome, still she would have resisted ; *Danae*, on the contrary, had not only foreseen and hastened her fall, but had even contrived it herself ; and had she deferred it, it would only have been with a view of enhancing her love and her pleasure, not for the sake of her virtue. All this is undeniable ; but admitting that she would have yielded at last (which, one way or other, is always the secret design of every woman, who engages in a love intrigue) to what purpose would a long and obstinate resistance have served, but to give her lover and herself unnecessary torment ? Suffice it, that the severest decorum of the present age does not require half so much time as she employed to make her conquest more difficult to *Agathon*. And do

do we imagine, that she did no violence to herself, in letting so complete a lover, whose extraordinary merit so fully justified the strength of her attachment, languish so long? Or, that the self-denial which this required, was not at least as painful to one whose imagination had been already so familiarized to the most ravishing pleasures of love, as the most vigorous resistance could possibly be to a person yet wholly inexperienced.

WE do not mean, by making all these reflections to justify the beautiful *Danae*, but only to shew that *Agathon*, in the height of his passion, had judged too hardly of her. It was unjust to impute to her as a fault that tenderness, which had rendered him as happy as he would have been miserable, had she persisted to requite the vehemence of his passion, with the calm sentiments of friendship alone. But the prejudice he now laboured under made him incapable of doing her justice: the thought that she had shewed the same

favours

favours to a *Hippias* as she had to himself, made him suspicious of every circumstance which might have convinced him, that though others had preceded him in the enjoyment of her favours, yet he was the first who had really made an impression upon her heart. In a word, he considered her now only as a woman of intrigue, who, in the point of view she appeared to him at present, had nothing to distinguish her from others of the same cast, but that she was more dangerous.

BUT his indignation could not be so violent against her, without recoiling upon himself. The idea that he had supplied the place of a *Hippias*, of a *Hyacinthus*, made him appear in his own eyes as the most contemptible of slaves; he blushed for his former better self, when he thought of the account he had to give of his residence at *Smyrna*. Would he, had *Danae* been even what the intoxication of his passion had represented her, have been able to justify his conduct before the tribunal

bunal of virtue? What could he then answer, when he could not but accuse himself, for having ingloriously lavished away so much time in indolence and ease, without any one commendable action: time, lost to his understanding, lost to virtue, lost to his own and to the public good? And what rendered the thought still more insupportable was, that it had been passed in contemptible efforts to gratify the voluptuous taste of a *Danae*, to indulge her inclinations, and her imagination yet inflamed with the remains of the lascivious fire of her youth. The reproaches which from these partial suggestions of jealousy he heaped upon himself, were carried as far, as the passionate emotions of a soul, impressed with a too violent but innate love of virtue, could possibly reach. The anguish, which in consequence of these reflections tortured his mind was so severe, that he passed the whole night succeeding this dreadful day, in violent agitations. A state, which  
together

together with his present disposition of soul, may afford us a very apt image of those torments, in which, according to the general belief of all people, the vicious expiate in another state, the crimes they have committed in this.

WE have already observed, that the being dissatisfied with ourselves, is a sentiment too painful for the soul to be able long to endure. It is natural, that self love should exert all its powers to relieve itself, and if we consider how little benefit can be expected from a continual consciousness of shame and self contempt, and on the contrary, how prejudicial grief and self humiliation, their natural consequences, must be to returning virtue; we have reason, perhaps, to look upon the part which self love takes in endeavouring to justify us to ourselves, as one of the most necessary springs of our soul in this world of error and passions. Remorse, is of no other use, but to impress us with a deep sense of the odiousness of any foolish

foolish and immoral conduct, of which we feel ourselves guilty. As soon as it hath produced this effect, it should immediately cease, its continuance would only deprive us of the power of correcting our faults, and would, therefore, be as prejudicial, as too great a degree of timidity, which only serves to make us more certainly run into the danger, we should endeavour either to avoid by prudence, or to oppose with resolution.

AGATHON had the greater reason to attend to these favourable insinuations of self love, as the immoderate warmth of his imagination had always represented to him his errors, and the object of them, in a much more odious light, than cool and unprejudiced reason would have done. The extraordinary changes of this capricious inchantress, and the little difficulty she has in passing suddenly from the extreme of any passion to one of an opposite nature, are probably well known to many of our readers from their own

expe-

experience. Such will not be surprized to hear, that the desire of justifying himself (as much as possible at least) in his own eyes, had imperceptibly induced our hero to let the beautiful *Danae* partake of that justification, which the most rigid admirers of virtue could not possibly refuse her. It was difficult, a *Socrates* would have said, it was extremely difficult to withstand the attractions of so many powers of enchantment united; flight was the only sure resource; this was, indeed, almost as difficult; but still at first you had this in your power, and it was great want of foresight in you not to reflect, that there would come a time, when you would even be deprived of that power. Thus, perhaps, he would have said who called *Critobulus* a very bold fellow, for having kissed a beautiful boy of *Alcibiades*, and advised the young *Xenophon* to fly from the sight of a beautiful face, as quickly as he would from a *Basilisk*. But, self love spoke not with so much truth and dis-

discretion. It was impossible, said she to our hero, to withstand such powerful attractions : it was impossible to fly from them. She availed herself of all the liveliness of his imagination to convince him of the truth of these flattering assurances ; and though she was not able totally to silence a certain internal sentiment which contradicted her, and which, perhaps, is the most certain criterion of the freedom of our will ; yet she so far succeeded, as insensibly to dispel the melancholy gloom that possessed his mind, and diffuse over it that pleasing light, in which we are generally apt to view every object that interests us.

BUT this tranquillity of our hero was of little service to *Danae*; her qualifications justified, indeed, the high idea he had entertained of her character, and both concurred to vindicate the greatness of his affection. He excused himself for having so ardently loved her, as long as he had reason to think the excellencies of her soul,

soul, as extraordinary as the beauties of her person. But, she lost all influence over his heart, the moment she had forfeited his esteem. The resolution of leaving her was the natural consequence of this : a resolution which did not cost him a single sigh, so thorough a contempt did he now feel for her. The recollection of what he had been, the consciousness of what he might again be, whenever he would, made it impossible for him to bear the thought of being one moment longer the slave of a second *Circe*; who, by a more shameful metamorphosis, than any of those which the companions of *Ulysses* must have undergone, had changed the hero of virtue into an effeminate voluptuary.

THINGS being thus circumstanced, it was by no means adviseable to wait her return, which, according to the notice he had received from her, would not exceed three days at furthest. She had not let a day pass without writing to him; and  
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the necessity he was under of returning answers as regularly, embarrassed him the more, from the great change his heart had undergone; for he had too much sincerity and vivacity to pretend to sentiments which his heart denied. His letters were for this reason so short, and discovered so much constraint, that *Danae* began to entertain a thought, which was not indeed very probable, but yet was the most natural one that could occur to her. She imagined, that her absence might have encouraged one of the beauties of *Smyrna*, to endeavour to seduce from her so enviable a lover. If her vanity laughed at so bold an attempt, yet the tenderness of her love would not suffer her to be as unconcerned at this, as one might reasonably have concluded, from the lively manner in which she rallied him about his indifference. In the mean time the consciousness of her merit got the better of all other reflections, and left her no room to doubt, that her bare

appearance would efface all the superficial impressions which a rival might have made upon his heart. If she had even been less certain of this, yet she was too prudent to let him perceive that she had any doubt of his affection, or was capable of becoming troublesome to him by an imaginary jealousy. This circumstance, with the others above mentioned, hastened her return; and the idea *Agathon* had conceived, that she might, perhaps, think of surprizing him by an earlier return, than she had promised in her last letter (an idea, so prophetic, that we are greatly inclined to ascribe it to the guardian angel of his virtue) shewed him, in the strongest manner, the necessity of the most speedy flight. As soon therefore, as he had dispatched a messenger to *Danae*, he repaired to the harbour to seek for a ship, which might convey him that very night from *Smyrna*.

C H A P.

## C H A P. IV.

*A small Digression.*

SUCH of our readers, as have descended to peruse this history with more attention, than they give to a french novel of the day, will have observed, that the recovery of our Hero from a state, which scarce entitled him to that appellation, is properly neither to be ascribed to his reason nor to his love of virtue; however agreeable it might have been to us to impute the sole honour of this surprizing change to either of those motives. Notwithstanding the sincere esteem we have for both, we must yet confess, that if it had depended entirely on them, *Agathon* might have continued the captive of the fair *Danae* for a much longer time. We have, indeed, cause to believe, that his reason would have been complaisant enough, by a variety of specious

cious arguments and conclusions, gradually to lull his love of virtue entirely to sleep ; or, perhaps, to persuade it to a friendly accommodation with pleasure, its natural and most dangerous enemy. We do not however deny, that both of them contributed to the delivery of our friend ; though it is certain, that jealousy and offended self-love had the greatest share in it : without the kind interposition therefore of two passions so generally censured, the once so wise, so virtuous *Agathon* would, to all appearance, have ingloriously trifled away at *Smyrna*, amidst the blandishments of love, a life begun with distinguished honour.

WE do not expect that the greater part of moralists will, by this observation, be prevailed upon to give up certain prejudices, which they seem to have inherited from their forefathers : prejudices, which if traced back to their source, for some centuries, will be found, by a tradition not very favourable to sound reason, to have been derived from monks

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and recluses, who have abounded among the eastern people of all religions. On the contrary, it would afford us the highest satisfaction, if the present history should prove the happy occasion of exciting any truly great philosopher of our own times, to carry the light of Genius into certain obscure parts of moral philosophy. These, indeed, to the great prejudice of the general good, might still remain undiscovered for several thousand years, if the discovery of them was to be brought about by the incessant zeal of those worthy persons who have, for several years past, made the German presses groan under a confused heap of indistinct, and often arbitrary ideas, enthusiastic sentiments, devout allegories, unnatural characters, and pompous declamations, thrown together in every possible form. To explain our ideas more clearly upon this subject, to such persons as are qualified to accomplish this pious wish of ours, or to point out

to them a more certain way of discovering this moral *Terra incognita*, than they may meet with throughout the course of this history, would have the appearance or a presumption, from which the consciousness of our own weakness, or, perhaps, of our indolence, is a sufficient security. We, therefore, dismiss the subject with this little hint, and after having, according to all appearance, delivered our Hero from the greatest danger his virtue had ever yet been, or may hereafter be exposed to, we content ourselves with making a few reflections—but, no; we have thought better of it—what other reflections could we possibly make, than those which *Agathon* himself, as soon as he had leisure, made on his own adventures. These must be so much the more natural and interesting, as he actually was in that situation, in which we must first by the help of our imagination place ourselves, and must search after those ideas, which of their own accord

pre-

presented themselves to him, and even intruded themselves upon him. We will therefore wait till he recovers such a tranquill disposition, as may enable the soul returning to itself, to review the past with an impartial eye. Let us only be permitted, before we proceed in our narrative, for the benefit of our younger readers, to whom we cannot help having a particular attachment, to make some remarks, which we know not how to introduce in a more proper place; remarks, which those who, like *Shach-Baham*, are not fond of moralizing, may cursorily pass over, or amuse themselves, in the mean time, if they like it, with looking out of the window, till we have dispatched them..

WHAT would you say then, my young friends, if with the magisterial aspect of a professor of moral philosophy in his chair, I should endeavour to prove to you with geometrical exactness, that you are under an obligation to be perfectly

insensible to those amiable creatures, for whom your eyes, your heart, your imagination conspire to give you an inclination, which, as long as it is undetermined, will for ever torment you, and as soon as it fixes itself upon any particular object, will become the soul of all your other passions.

THAT we could produce such a proof, and what is something harder still, that we could impose on you the obligation, not to contract an attachment for any of these agreeable creatures, however perfect they may seem in your enchanted eyes, till you have been told that you may love them—is a circumstance you cannot be unacquainted with. Therefore, as this has been so often proved, we may now take it for granted; and the only question in our opinion is, how it can be brought about that your reluctant hearts should be made to comply with duties, you had a thousand specious objections to, which in the end, however,

ever, come only to this, that you have no inclination to practise them.

THE solution of this question seems to us to be the greatest difficulty, in which the generality of moralists leave us with an indifference, which is the more inhuman, as few of them have not in some degree or other experienced, that it is not so easy to conquer an enemy as to prove that he ought to be conquered.

IN the mean time, till some benevolent Genius shall discover a sure, effectual and general method of removing this difficulty, we shall presume to give you a piece of advice, which, indeed, is neither general, nor without some inconvenience; but yet, every circumstance considered, may be of considerable use to you in several respects, till some infallible moral anodyne is discovered.

WE shall here take for granted two equally certain truths: the first is, that the generality of young people, and perhaps many of the old, have a stronger

propensity either to tenderness, or to love, in the common acceptation of the word, than to any other natural passion. The other is, that *Socrates*, in the place mentioned in the last chapter, has not carried the fatal consequences of love, considered as a violent passion for one single object, (which is the only kind of love in question) farther than daily experience justifies. “Thou unhappy man!” said he to the young *Xenophon*, “canst thou conceive what may be the consequences of the kiss thou hast just now given?” For *Xenophon* had not the least idea that it was so dangerous a thing to kiss a beautiful boy, or to express myself agreeably to our manners, to kiss a fine girl; and he was inconsiderate enough to confess, that he had always confidence enough in himself, to expose himself to these dangerous experiments.” Thinkest thou, added the philosopher, that thou wilt continue to be free, and wilt not rather become the slave of what thou lovest? Wouldst thou not squander

squander a great deal upon destructive pleasure? Thinkest thou, that thou wouldest have much leisure to employ in anything great or useful, or rather wouldest thou not be forced to spend thy time in occupations, which even a mad man would be ashamed of?" It is impossible to describe in such few words, more exactly the consequences of this kind of love— Of what use will it be to us, my friends, to deceive ourselves? Even the most innocent love, even that, which in young enthusiastic minds, seems to agree so perfectly with virtue, carries with it a secret poison, whose effects are the more dangerous, as they are slow and imperceptible.—What is therefore to be done?—The advice of the elder *Cato*, or that, which *Lucretius*, agreeably to the tenets of his sect gives us, is, in its consequences more pernicious than the evil itself. Even the principles and example of the wise *Socrates*, are in this point only practicable under certain cir-

cumstances—and to say the truth, we wish, out of regard to the whole human race, that some *Socrates* may, hereafter, succeed in depriving love totally of his divinity, as well as of his arrows and wings, and making the passion a mere regular gratification of a natural appetite. All the benefit accruing to the world by this means, would be, that human society would necessarily experience some degree of those bad effects, which would arise from a total suppression of the passions.

Now for our advice—The *Tartuff's*, and those pitiful beings, who would persuade the world to venerate as relics the absurdities of their melancholy imaginations, may shake their heads as much as they please.—My young friends, either employ yourselves in preparations for the part you are designed for, or to fulfill it really. Strive to acquire those qualifications which are rewarded with the esteem of the wise and

of posterity; and seek to attain virtue, which alone constitutes the internal happiness of our being.—“A truce with your morality, good Sir;” you may exclaim here, “this is not what we want to hear from you; all this has already been much better said by *Claville*, and by *Abbt* better still—*Your preservative against love?*”—Preservative against love? Heaven forbid! Or, if you want such, you may easily be supplied by all the quacks in morality, and—all the apothecaries shops. Our advice proceeds upon a quite different plan. If you either will, or must fall in love, every thing, believe me, depends upon the object on which you place your affections—Find out an *Afpafia*, a *Leontium*, a *Ninon*—endeavour to gain her favour, and, if possible, her friendship. The advantages, which such a connection will procure you, both in regard to your judgment, your taste, your morals—Yes, Sirs, your morals, and even the duties of your station, will reward all  
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your pains. "Excellent! *Aspasias* and *Ninnos!* We must search for them all over Europe"—That we do not advise; we mean only in case you find them.—"But, suppose we cannot meet with such."—Why then look out for the most sensible, virtuous and amiable woman you can find—and here (as we would not wish you to go out of your way) we allow you to seek for her not only among the most beautiful of her sex: if she is amiable, you will be the more enamoured of her; if virtuous, she will not deceive you; if prudent, she will not suffer herself to be deceived by you. Here, therefore, you may place your affections without danger.—"But this does not satisfy us; the question is, how we may engage her affections?"—Aye—there the secret lies; the trial may at least be made, and, provided you are assiduous, we assure you, you will carry on your novel for ten years in a line perpetually converging, without drawing nearer to the

central

central point—and this is all we had to say to you.

## C H A P . V.

*Irresolution of Agathon; an unexpected Incident determines him.*

WE return to our *Agathon*, whom we left at the end of the third chapter in his way to the harbour of *Smyrna*.

No man could possibly be more determined, than he was upon going out, to embark in the first vessel he should meet with ready to sail, though it should have conveyed him even to the Antipodes. But,—such is the weakness of the human heart!—when he came to the port, and saw a number of ships waiting only for the signal to weigh anchor, he was almost tempted to return, and, instead of flying from the fair *Danae*, to run into her arms with

with all the transport of an enraptured lover.

BUT, let us be reasonable; a *Danae* well deserved that the resolution of leaving her should cost something more than a transient sigh: and it was very natural that *Agathon*, though resolved to execute his virtuous design, should take a retrospect of the past, and represent to himself in a manner more lively than ever, that happiness he now voluntarily renounced, to launch again as a wandering exile into the ocean of the world, and risque the chances of an uncertain return. This last idea startled him, but it was soon banished by other sentiments, which more strongly affected his tender heart, than any thing in which lie himself was alone concerned. He put himself in the place of *Danae*. He represented the anxiety she must feel at her return, when she should be informed of his flight. She had loved him so tenderly—all that *Hippias* had said to her prejudice, all that he added from himself,

himself, could not in this moment overcome the persuasive influence of his feelings, which convinced him that he was really beloved by her. If the anxiety for the loss of a beloved object, is to be measured by the strength of our affection, how miserable must *Danae* be ! The compassion which this reflection excited in his mind, revived her interest in his heart. Her image presented itself again to his view, with all those charms, whose magic power he had so often experienced. What a recollection !—He could not forbear dwelling upon the idea for some minutes, and still felt his efforts to get rid of it grow weaker. His soul, though half subdued, still continued a resistance which constantly lost it's force. Love, to make a surer conquest of him, concealed itself under the pleasing images of compassion, generosity and gratitude.—What ? Should he return so ardent an affection with such base ingratitude ? To plunge a dagger into the bosom of one's beloved, the very moment

moment she is thinking to return in-haste to the arms of a faithful lover; in a bosom too, which, overflowing with tenderness, burns to receive him!—This was, in itself, a very affecting representation, and how much more affecting from the idea which insensibly intruded itself of the beauties of that bosom!—To forsake her; to steal away secretly from her—would she not have received death from his hand as a favour, in comparison of such cruelty? This would have been his case, if he were in her situation; and this idea passion is always sure to adopt, when it finds its account in it.

To all these tender images, his fixed resolution opposed the reasons we are already acquainted with: but these had lost half their influence, from the instant that his heart brought his virtue over again to the interest of his fair friend. The danger was urgent, every minute was, as it were, decisive. *Danyae's* return was uncertain, and it can-

not be doubted, that if she had arrived in time, she would have found means to efface all the unfavourable impressions the treachery of the Sophist had made upon a heart, so much interested to find her innocent.

A lucky accident—yet why should we ascribe to accident, what we should rather consider as a proof, that some invincible power is always ready to lend it's aid to failing virtue?—An accident, however, did so order it, that at this critical juncture, *Agathon* perceived among the number of foreigners who trade to *Smyrna* from all parts of the world, a man, whom he had been intimately acquainted with at *Athens*, and whom he had had an opportunity of obliging by some considerable services. This was a merchant of *Syracuse*, who to skill in his profession, united integrity of character, and, what is very unusual, in at least one half of the German empire, a love of the Muses. Qualifications, which, as they made him  
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the more agreeable to *Agathon*, at the same time enabled him to form a better judgment of his merit. The Syracusan expressed the highest satisfaction at so unexpected a meeting, and offered his services to our Hero in a manner that shewed he wished they might be accepted; for *Agathon's* banishment from *Athens* was too public a transaction, to be unknown in any part of *Greece*.

AFTER such inquiries as are usual among friends, who unexpectedly meet after a long separation, the merchant told him a piece of news that drew the attention of all the European Greeks; this was the extraordinary favour which *Plato* enjoyed with the younger *Dionysius* at *Syracuse*. He acquainted him with the reformation philosophy had wrought in the character of the prince, and the warm hopes conceived by the *Sicilians*, of enjoying happier times from the effects of so wonderful a change. He concluded with inviting *Agathon*, if no other business of consequence

quence detained him at *Smyrna*, to accompany him to *Syracuse*, which was now more likely than ever to become the resort of the wisest and most virtuous men. He told him further, that his ship laden with Asiatic merchandize, was ready to sail the same evening.

THE explosion occasioned by a spark falling into a magazine of gunpowder is not more sudden, than the revolution produced in the mind of our Hero, by this piece of intelligence. This single idea, set, if I may be allowed the expression, his whole soul in a flame—But what an idea was this!—*Plato*, the friend of *Dionysius*—*Dionysius*, notoriously stigmatized for every extravagance that youth, elated with absolute power, can possibly be hurried into—the tyrant *Dionysius*, a lover of philosophy, a disciple of virtue—and should *Agathon* suffer the bloom of his life to be lost in voluptuous indolence? Should he not hasten to assist that divine philosopher, whose sublime principles he had

had begun to put in practice with so much applause at *Athens*, in completing the glorious work of converting a lawless tyrant into a good prince, and securing the general happiness of a whole people?—What an undertaking! what a prospect for a soul like his! It engrossed all his attention; he once more felt that he was *Agathon*—he once more felt the vital force of those moral principles, which inspire the animating belief that we are born for noble purposes, and cherishes that self-esteem which is one of the strongest motives to virtue. No further struggle, no further effort was now necessary to detach him from *Danae*, and make him return to virtue with all the ardour of a lover, who, after a long absence, throws himself again into the arms of his mistress. His Syracusan friend did not find it necessary to use any persuasions; *Agathon* accepted his proposals with the greatest joy. As of all the presents the liberality of *Danae* had so profusely

fusely heaped upon him, he did not chuse to take more than was absolutely necessary for his voyage, he, therefore, wanted very little time to prepare for his departure. A favourable wind filled the sails of the vessel which was soon to transport him from the corrupt city of *Smyrna*; and so superior was the triumph which vittue in this happy hour obtained over her adversary, that our Hero saw the pleasing coast of *Asia* vanish from his sight, without shedding a single tear at the thought of leaving them for ever.

WHAT is then to become of poor *Danae*, methinks I hear some young fair one say, whose heart tells her, that she could never be reconciled to virtue, for running away with her lover in so cruel a manner? Is she now to be entirely forgotten? And will it give no concern to the virtuous *Agathon*, if his infidelity should break that heart which had made him so happy?—But, with your leave, my fair readers, what could he do, after  
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his resolution was once taken? Must he not quit *Smyrna*, in order to go to *Syracuse*, and after having considered every circumstance impartially, was he not under the necessity of going there? For would you have an *Agathon* pass away his whole life like a *Veneris puerulus*, (an expression which you must beg some of your lovers to translate for you) in amorous careffes on the bosom of the tender *Danae*? And to take her with him to *Syracuse* was, for several reasons, by no means adviseable, if even she had been willing to quit *Smyrna* on his account. Or, do you imagine, that he ought to have waited, and endeavoured to obtain the consent of his mistress?—This was all he could have done, had he entertained a secret design of staying with her. Every thing therefore considered, he could not, in our opinion, have acted otherwise. He left her a letter, in which he disclosed his intentions with a sincerity, which at the same time justified them. He did not mock

mock her with promises of affection, which would have been a shocking contrast to his behaviour; on the contrary, instead of giving her pain by any reproaches, he recapitulated his obligations to her in the strongest manner. At the end of his letter, an expression escaped him, which probably he would have had generosity enough to omit, had he allowed himself time to reflect upon it: for he concluded with telling her, that he hoped one half of that resolution of mind she had exerted to support the loss of an *Alcibiades*, or to free herself from the embraces of a *Hyacinthus*, would be more than sufficient to enable her in a short time to bear his absence with indifference. How easily, added he, may *Danae* bear the loss of a lover; she, who with a single glance only, can make as many slaves as she pleases!—This was rather severe—but his disposition of mind at that time, was not sufficiently composed, to make him sensible of the full force of what he said.

AND thus concludes the history of the loves of *Agathon* and the fair *Danae*; and thus, my fair readers, have all love stories ended, and all future ones which may have a similar beginning, will certainly have a like conclusion.

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## C H A P. VI.

### *Reflections, Inferences, and Resolutions.*

THE man who from the faults of his predecessors, or from those he daily observes in his cotemporaries, has learnt the art of committing none himself, has incontestably a much better claim to the title of the wisest of men, than *Confucius*, *Socrates*, or even king *Solomon*; who, contrary to the common course of nature, was guilty of his greatest follies, at that period of life, when most men are reclaimed from their's. In the mean time, till this art is discovered, it is our opinion

opinion, that he may be looked upon as a wise man, who commits the fewest faults, who is the soonest reclaimed, and derives from them such lessons for his conduct, as may render him for the future less liable to error.

How far *Agathon* deserved this appellation, our readers will in time be able to determine for themselves; as for our part, we are not by any means interested in setting him out to a greater advantage than the truth will justify. We represent him such as he is; we shall, therefore, proceed to relate his history with the same veracity we have hitherto observed, and assure our readers once for all, that we are not to blame, if he does not always act in such a manner as we, perhaps, may wish that he had.

DURING his passage to *Sicily*, which was very favourable, he had time enough to reflect upon what had happened to him at *Smyrna*. How? some of my readers will here exclaim, reflections again? Cer-

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tainly, Sirs, and in his situation it would have been unpardonable in him not to have made some. So much the worse for you, if, on certain occasions, you do not find in yourself the same inclination; perhaps you would do well to learn this custom from him.

IT is not so easy for an *Agathon* as for other men, to banish the idea of past follies. Is not a single fault sometimes more than sufficient to tarnish the lustre of the most brilliant life? How mortifying is it to find a defect in any master-piece of art, a picture for instance, or a poem, which cannot be corrected without destroying the whole? And how much more mortifying is it when a single defect deprives a beautiful composition of the merit of perfection? A sensation of this kind was sufficiently painful, to oblige our Hero to reflect more seriously upon the causes of what had befallen him. How did he blush for himself, when he recollect<sup>ed</sup> the too confident defiance, by which

which he had at first provoked *Hippias*, and, in some degree, authorized the trial upon himself, whether there was such a virtue as could resist the strongest and most alluring temptations.—What made him then so confident? Was it the remembrance of the conquest he had gained over the Delphic Priestess? Or, the immediate consciousness of that indifference, with which he had considered the charms of the young *Cyane*? Was it the experience, that the temptations which had on all sides insnared his innocence in the house of *Hippias*, had rather created in him disgust than excited passion? Or, was it an abhorrence of the principles of *Hippias*—and the confidence he placed in the peculiar strength of his own?—But, is it a necessary consequence, that he who has gained several victories, should never be overcome? Was it not in the power of a *Danae* to accomplish that, which neither the Pythian Priestess, nor the Thracian Bacchants, nor *Cyane*,

nor, perhaps, all the beauties of the king of *Perisia's* seraglio, had or could have effected?—And what reason had he to depend upon the strength of his principles?—Even in this point, he indulged a subtle self-deceit, of which perhaps experience only could make him sensible. Enraptured with the idea of virtue, he imagined not that his soul could ever find attractions in what was directly contrary to this intellectual beauty. Experience alone could shew him how fallacious our ideas are, whenever we inconfidately pretend to realize them.—Consider virtue in herself, and in her highest degree of perfection—she is divine; nay (to use the bold, though just expression of an excellent writer) she is the divinity itself.—But what mortal can presume to confide in the omnipotent strength of this ideal virtue? Every man experiences how far he may trust his own—What is more odious than the idea of vice? *Agathon* therefore trusted to  
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the impossibility that it should ever appear amiable in his eyes, and was deceived!—because he did not imagine that there could be a doubtful point of view in which the out-lines of vice and virtue would be so blended, in which beauty and the graces would impart such a lustre to vice, as to conceal its deformity, and give it even the colours and charms of virtue? He knew not that nothing is easier, than to wander in this seducing twilight from the path of virtue, and be lost in a labyrinth, which will insensibly lead us into an agreeable forgetfulness of ourselves and of our duties.

THE reflections which our Hero made upon the necessity of having a cautious diffidence of the power of good principles, and the danger of looking upon them as the measure of our strength, led him next to a different consideration, which convinced him how little dependence the soul can have upon a state of continued moral enthusiasm, such as his

soul had been in, till seduced by the artful snares of the fair *Danae*. He recalled to his mind all the circumstances that had conspired to render this enchanting enthusiasm so natural to him, and recollected the various dangers to which it had exposed him. At *Delphos* it had nearly made him the dupe of the artifices of a counterfeit *Apollo*; at *Athens* it had really betrayed him into the hands of his most inveterate enemies; yet in both these dangers, had he retained his virtue, that invaluable jewel, the possession of which made him insensible to the loss of every thing, that a favourite of fortune can be deprived of. But, his virtue betrayed by this very enthusiasm, yielded at length to the seductions of his own heart, as well as to the artifices of the beautiful *Danae*. Was not that magic light, his imagination diffused over every object that corresponded with his ideas; was not that imperceptible manner in which he substituted his ideas in the place of reality, the true

true reason, why *Danae* made so extraordinary an impression upon his heart? Was it not that enthusiastic love of what is beautiful, under the bright wings of which his passion concealed itself, till at last by gentle and insensible gradations, it took entire possession of his soul? Was it not the long habit in which he had indulged himself of subsisting upon pleasing sensations, which insensibly softened, in order the more readily to dissolve it in so delightful a flame? Must not his propensity to raptures of the fancy, however spiritual their object might be, make him at length pant after other raptures, after those from which an unknown, confused, yet therefore, more lively internal sentiment, promised him the real enjoyment of that most perfect happiness, of which only transient presages had hitherto touched his imagination, and which by these light touches had already transported it beyond itself? Here *Agathon* recollects the objections *Hippias*

had started against this enthusiasm, and against that species of philosophy, which produces and supports it; and found them now as consistent with his own experience, as they had before appeared to him false and absurd. He was the more inclined to approve the Sophist's opinion of the origin and real properties of this sublime enthusiasm, as from the time he had parted with it in the arms of the fair *Danae*, he had not been able to recover it; and as that lively sense of virtue, which now again inflamed his heart, could neither restore to his moral ideas that lustre they before had, nor could re-establish in its former estimation with him, the poetical metaphysics of the Orphean sect. Experience, he believed, had convinced him, that this internal feeling, by the testimony of which he had thought to invalidate the conclusions of the Sophist, was but a very doubtful criterion of truth. He thought, that *Hippias* had as much right to establish his brutal system of

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materialism, and his pernicious morality, as the Theologists to support their mysterious doctrine of spiritual beings, from the plea of internal feelings and experience. He conceived it probable, that it was owing entirely to the different turn of the imagination, that at one time we believe ourselves allied to the Gods, at another to the brute creation ; because at one time every object appears to us in a gloomy and serious, at another, in a gay and cheerful light ; because in one instant we know no real and solid pleasure; but with an arrogant contempt of terrestrial things, in melancholy reflections on their emptiness, to lose ourselves in the unknown regions beyond the grave, and in the bottomless abyss of eternity : in another, we cannot conceive a more enchanting picture of an enviable delight, than that of a young *Bacchus* reclining his ivy-crowned head on the bosom of a most beautiful nymph, throwing one arm around her lovely waist, and stretching

out the other to receive a foaming goblet, which with a smile she presents to him, filled with nectar, just preffed with her own lovely hands from the bursting grapes; while the Fauns and frolicksome Nymphs with the Deities of love, wantonly dance around him, pursue each other through rose-bushes, or fatigued with their sports, repose in retired grottos, preparing for new pastimes.

THE conclusion he deduced from all these reflections, and various others, which we shall spare our readers, was this: that the sublime doctrine of the theology of *Zoroafter* and *Orpheus*, had probably, (for he did not yet venture to assert any thing with certainty upon this point) not much more reality in them, than those laughing images, under which the painters and poets had deified the pleasures of sense: that the former, indeed, seemed more favourable to virtue, and fitter to elevate the soul to a sublimity, purity and strength more than human, but that in fact they might

might be as prejudicial to the true destination of man, as the latter; partly, because it seems an absurd as well as a fruitless undertaking, to think of making ourselves better than nature intended we should be; or, at the expence of one half of our existence, to strive to attain a kind of perfection, which is in constant opposition to the duties of it; partly, because such men, if even they could succeed in transforming themselves into demi-gods, or spiritual intelligencies, would thereby become so much the less proper to fulfil any of the common obligations of human society. Considered in this point of view, the enthusiasm of the Theologist seemed, indeed to him, to be less hurtful than the system of the Sensualist, but equally useless to society. As the first either withdraws himself wholly from society (which indeed is the best thing he can do) or, if he passes from a contemplative to an active life, his ignorance of a world in which he is

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an entire stranger, or certain abstract ideas which will never agree with the object he has before him, or an excess of moral sensibility, with a thousand other causes, derived from his former manner of life, lead him frequently to hurt others contrary to his intentions, and always to injure himself.

To enquire how far these positions may be true, or in what particular cases they may admit of some exceptions, would carry us too far from our purpose. It is enough for us, that they appeared to *Agathon* sufficiently founded, to induce him the more easily to forgive himself, that as the *Ulysses* of *Homer* in the island of *Calypso*, he had suffered himself to be detained in the enchanted land of pleasure, and prevented from executing his original design of visiting the disciples of *Zoroaster* and the Priests of *Sais*, as soon as *Danae* had restored him to his liberty. In short, his experience made him suspect the truth of his former turn of thinking,  
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without being able to remove a certain secret propensity to his old favourite ideas. In this point, his reason could neither be consistent with his heart, nor his heart with itself, and he was not yet sufficiently composed, or, perhaps, he was too indolent to reduce his present ideas into a system which might have satisfied them both. A ship, indeed, is not the properest place to execute such a design, for which the stillness of a dark grove is scarcely silent enough, and therefore *Agathon* may be excused for having deferred this business, though in reality it is such a kind of business as will no more admit of delay, than the repairing of a ruinous building; for as the building approaches nearer to total destruction every day that the repairs are deferred, so the breaches in our moral ideas, and the divisions between our understanding and our heart, become constantly greater and more dangerous, the longer we delay to inquire into them with proper attention,  
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and to re-establish a just connection and harmony between the parts and the whole.

THIS delay, however, in *Agathon's* particular situation at that time, was the less prejudicial, as he was more strongly convinced than ever, of the beauty of virtue, and the indispensable obligation we are under of obeying her laws ; and as he considered an active life directed to the true general good, as the destination of all men. If any exceptions were to be made in favour of spirits merely contemplative, yet he certainly looked upon himself to be designed for such a kind of life. Before this time, he had been only by accident and against his inclination compelled to engage in public business ; now, it was in consequence of his present, and as he thought improved turn of mind, that he resolved to enter upon it. A pleasing ecstasy which, at that instant, appeared to him preferable to the most delightful intoxication of pleasure, diffused

fused itself throughout his whole being, when he considered, that he might assist in restoring to *Sicily*, the infinite advantages of true freedom, and of a constitution permanently fixed on the basis of wise laws and regulations.—His fertile imagination represented to him the effects of his labours in a variety of pleasing images of public happiness—with transporting he felt joy within himself powers equal to so noble an undertaking, and his delight was the more complete, as he felt at the same time that neither ambition, nor a vain desire of fame, had any share in it: that it was rather a virtuous desire of doing good in a more extensive sphere: a desire, the expectation of satisfying which, gave him that foretaste of the most godlike of all pleasures human nature is susceptible of. His experience, how much soever it had cost him, seemed not too dearly purchased, since by this means he thought he should be better qualified to avoid the rocks, on which

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the prudence or the virtue of those, who engage in public affairs, is frequently shipwrecked. He therefore made a fixed resolution, never to suffer himself to be seduced by any second *Danae*. He fancied, that he could more confidently rely upon himself in this point, as his firmness had already been sufficient to disengage him from the first; and as he might reasonably think that it was impossible he should ever be exposed to a more dangerous trial. Free from ambition and avarice, ever watchful to the ~~foibles~~ of his heart, which he had learnt to know, he did not imagine he had any thing to apprehend from other passions, that, probably, still lay concealed in his bosom. No ill-presaging fear disturbed him in the uninterrupted enjoyment of his hopes; they employed him while awake, and were even the subject of his dreams; they were the principal topic of his discourse with the Syracusan merchant, they made him insensible to the fatigues

fatigues of the voyage, and amply repaid him for the loss of the once beloved *Danae*; a loss, the painful sense of which was diminished every day. Thus, after having touched at a few sea-port towns of *Greece*, in which he avoided making himself known, favourable winds and a skilful pilot brought him to *Syracuse*, where he might have an opportunity of learning, that in a situation so dangerous as that—of eminence at the court of a Prince, virtue must either be sacrificed to prudence, or that prudence, however circumspect, would still be insufficient to prevent the fall of the virtuous.

C H A P.

## C H A P. VII.

*One or two Digressions.*

WE wish to have female readers—  
(for if this history were less founded on truth, than it is; yet could it not be ranked among those dangerous romances, which, the author of the most dangerous and instructive one that ever appeared, deters young ladies from perusing)—and we should be sorry to see any lady who may have had patience enough to read this eighth book through—from an idea that nothing interesting could now be expected from it, after *Agathon*, by so base a trick, and by secret flight, had renounced the service of love——we should be sorry to see any lady, let the third part of this history carelessly slip out of her beautiful hands, and——perhaps take up the *Sopha* of *Crebillon*, or the lovely little puppet of Mr. *De Bibiena*.

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to dissipate the vapours, which the infidelity and reflections of our hero may have occasioned.

Whence my fair ladies does it arise, that most of you, are so much more inclined to excuse all the follies love can possibly make us commit, rather than forgive us the recovery of our reason to its natural state ? Confess, that we are the more agreeable to you, the more we demonstrate, by the weaknesses you bring us to, the superiority of your charms to the strength of manly wisdom.—What a captivating picture is not a *Deianira* wrapt up in the lion's skin of her robust lover, and with his club on her shoulders, as she casts a smiling glance of triumph, upon the subduer of giants and dragons, who disguised in her long flowing garments, awkwardly turns the effeminate spinning wheel among her maidens ?—We are acquainted with some few, whom this little exclamation does not at all concern ; but if we are to speak our sentiments

ments without flattery (which indeed we should not do, if we were guided by prudence) we doubt, whether the wisest among them, at the same time that she endeavours to limit the follies of her lover, can refrain from tacitly feeling the same triumphant satisfaction in the thought, that she is amiable enough to make a man of merit forget his own dignity.

THE critics will think this a common observation, which says neither more nor less than what *Gay* has said with infinitely greater elegance in one of his fables, and what we have all been long acquainted with.—That vanity is the real spring of all the passions of the female heart. We don't entirely deny the charge, though at the same time we cannot think with these critics, that our observation goes so far—but no more of this.

BUT to put our fair readers into good humour again, we cannot suppress a little anecdote which concerns the heart of our hero, even though he should thereby

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run a fresh risque of losing the esteem which he had began to recover with certain venerable ladies, who never have loved themselves, and (thank Heaven) have never been beloved.—The anecdote is this ;—

However *Agathon* might be satisfied with himself in regard to his escape from his agreeable captivity at *Smyrna*; how little soever the enchantment in which we have seen him, was able to suppress the love of virtue, that characteristic passion of noble souls; however sincere the vows were he then made, never hereafter to stray from her paths; how great and important soever the sentiments which then engrossed his soul; how much soever (to say every thing in one word) he was *Agathon* again: Yet there were still hours, in which he was obliged to confess that in the enthusiasm of love, and in the arms of the fair *Danae*—he had been happy. There may be (said he to himself) much illusion, much refinement,

finement, and fancy in love, yet it's joys are certainly not imaginary.—I felt, and I feel now, as strongly as my own existence, that her joys were real, as real in their kind, as the joys of virtue,—wherefore then should it be impossible to unite love and virtue? To enjoy them both—that indeed would be a complete felicity.

To prevent our being misunderstood by those who are acquainted only with the manners and customs of the country or place where they are born, it is necessary we should here make a small digression, and acquaint them, that a familiar intercourse with ladies of a certain class, (or to express myself not so much like a Frenchman, but less equivocally) with such women as made a trade of what is improperly called love, was a thing so far permitted among the Greeks, that it would have been ridiculous in the most rigid fathers to have refused their sons, even while under their direction, the privilege of having a mistress of this kind.

kind. Women and virgins enjoyed here, as well as in all other places, the particular protection of the laws, and secured by the customs and manners of that people, were much less exposed to attempts on their virtue, than they are with us. Attempts of this kind were as difficult, as the punishment of such a crime was rigorous. This was doubtless the reason why women of such a stamp as a *Phryne* or a *Lais* were permitted; that others who were looked upon as sacred in the eyes of the Grecian legislators, the mothers of citizens, or, such as were destined to that honour, might be better secured from the attacks of impetuous youth: and how dissolute soever the Athenian ladies are represented by the licentious wit of *Aristophanes*, yet it is certain that the wives and daughters of the Greeks, were in general remarkable for their modesty; and that the manners of a wife, and of a courtezan, were

as widely different among them, as in some capital cities of Europe. At present they are studiously made to resemble each other. Whether this institution was entirely commendable, is another question, which we have nothing to do with here: We mention it only to obviate the suspicion that *Agathon's* repentance and remorse arose from the idea of its being unjustifiable to have an intrigue with a *Danae*. *Agathon* thought upon this subject, like the other Greeks of his time. Throughout all *Greece* (*Sparta* perhaps only excepted) persons of his age, might pass the night with a female dancer or singer, without any danger of being censured; provided these amusements did not interfere with the duties of their station, and were indulged only with that degree of moderation, which in the opinion of these Pagans, was the exact boundary between virtue and vice. If *Alcibiades* was blamed, for having suffered

fered himself to be painted, as reposing from the fatigues of victory on the bosom of the fair *Nemea*; or, for having born on his shield the image of the God of Love, armed with the lightning of *Jupiter*; freedoms which *Plutarch* assures us, were only thought ill of by the oldest and gravest of the Athenians; men, whose zeal against the follies of youth, often proceeds not so much from a love of virtue, as from the disagreeable circumstance of being reminded by the appearance of those follies, how far they have left the days of their youth behind them, and how much nearer they approach the grave. If then these extravagancies were blamed in *Alcibiades*, it was not his propensity to pleasure that was the object of censure, nor his familiar intercourse with a female, who like others of her situation and profession, was devoted to the entertainment of the public; but it was the pride that displayed itself in this instance,

the contempt of the laws of decorum, and of that kind of gravity, which in free states is justly required of those who are at the head of affairs, at least, when they appear out of the circle of private life. Foibles and amusements might have been overlooked in him, as well as in others; but it was impossible to forgive the parade he made of them; that excessive dissoluteness with which he abandoned himself to his taste for riot and voluptuousness. That drenched in wine and perfumes, with the disorderly and fatigued appearance of a man who has passed a long winter's night in debauchery, just warm from the embraces of some female dancer, he should have come into the council chamber;—that in such a situation, so ill prepared, he yet should have thought himself abundantly qualified (and, perhaps, he really was so) to attend to the affairs of the state, and prescribe to the venerable fathers of the public

public what they ought to do :—This was a conduct that could not be forgiven, and which drew after it the fatal train of consequences, which became the ruin of the republic, and at length of himself.

IN general it has been long since agreed, that the Greeks had different ideas of love from the modern Europeans ; for we are not now speaking of the metaphysical refinements and dreams of the divine *Plato*.—Their ideas upon this point appear more conformable to nature and sound reason than our's, in which there is the strangest contrast of Scythian barbarism and Moorish gallantry. They honoured conjugal attachment, but they had no idea of that romantic passion, we distinguish by the name of love, a passion, which numbers of romance writers among our neighbours on the other side of the *Rhine*, and in *England*, have endeavoured to elevate into an heroic virtue;

of this, in fact, they had no more conception, than of those tragi-comic productions of some modern, chiefly female, writers, who refining upon the idea of the times of ancient chivalry have filled whole volumes in representing a passion, which is kept up by silent admiration, by sighs and tears, and which though unfortunate and even destitute of a shadow of hope, is yet for ever constant. A passion so insipid, so unmanly, and which makes so ridiculous a contrast with that heroism it is meant to be connected with, was unknown to that ingenious people, whose elegant and sportive imagination created the Goddess of love, the Graces, and so many other Deities of festivity. They knew only that kind of love which sports, kisses and is happy; or to speak with more propriety, this only appeared to them under certain restrictions, to be natural becoming and innocent: that love which, with all the symptoms of a feverish

ish delirium, overpowers the whole soul, was in their eyes one of the most dangerous of passions, an enemy to virtue, a disturber of family peace, the cause of the most fatal extravagancies, and most odious vices. Few instances of this kind occur in their history ; and even these are represented in their tragedies in such colours, as must excite a general abhorrence. Their comedies, on the contrary, admit of no other kind of love, than that natural instinct which taste, chance, and opportunity direct to one particular object : a love, which embellished by the Graces, and frequently too by the Muses, has pleasure only for its end, and wishes not to be more refined, or sublime, than it is in reality. Such a passion as this, if even it should break into excesses, which prompt us to violate any moral duty, is however always less dangerous in its effects, and is more easily restrained, than that tragic kind of love we before men-

tioned: this, indeed, they considered rather as being lighted up by the torch of the Furies, than by that of the God of love, rather as the effect of the vengeance of some offended Deity, than as that sweet intoxication, which they regarded like sleep and wine as the presents of beneficent nature, to sweeten the cares of life, and enable us to support its fatigues.

WE should, doubtless, have been better informed of the manners of the Greeks in this particular, if, by a misfortune the Muses will for ever lament, the comedies of an *Alexis*, a *Menander*, a *Diphilus*, a *Philemon*, an *Apollodorus*, and other celebrated Poets, who flourished in the brightest æra of the Attic taste, had not become a prey to the barbarism of Monks and Saracens. But these vouchers are not wanting to justify the observations we have made. Do we not find the venerable *Solon*, even in an advanced age, acknowledging, in verses, which are not unworthy

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thy the age of a *Voltaire*, that “ he had  
“ retired from all other employments, to  
“ pass the remainder of his days with  
“ *Venus, Bacchus, and the Muses*, the on-  
“ ly sources of joy to mortals ? ” Do we  
not find the wise *Socrates*, accompanied by  
his young friends, paying a visit without  
scruple to the beautiful and agreeable  
*Theodota*, that he might have a sight of  
that beauty, which had been extolled by  
one of the company as surpassing all de-  
scription ? Do we not find that he thought  
it no impeachment to his wisdom, to  
teach this same *Theodota* in a jocose man-  
ner, the art of acquiring lovers ? Was  
he not a friend, and an admirer, nay, if  
we may credit *Plato*, a scholar of the ce-  
lebrated *Aspasia*, whose house, notwith-  
standing the censures she had been expo-  
sed to from the licentious insolence of the  
comedy of that time, was the rendezvous  
of men of the first genius in *Athens* ? How-  
ever continent he might always be, in re-

spect to the pleasures of the Paphian Goddess with his two wives, yet we may perceive that his principles, with regard to this passion, were perfectly consistent with the general taste of his country. He distinguished the appetite from the passion, the work of nature from that of the fancy : against the latter he cautions us, as we have already hinted in the fourth chapter ; but with regard to the first he advises us (as *Xenophon* declares) to satisfy it, by indulging a kind of love, (the word used by the Greeks, expresses the thing much better) in which the soul has as little share as possible. An advice, which admits indeed of some restrictions, though it is founded upon this truth, confirmed by experience, that the love which takes entire possession of the soul, deprives it generally of all power over itself, enervates its faculties, and renders it unfit for any noble exploits.

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To what purpose, (methinks I hear the hypocritical *Theogiton* ask with a deep groan, and muttering a half suppressed anathema) to what purpose all this fine digression? Is it then your design to propose the scandalous principles, and manners of blind and corrupt heathens, as models of imitation to our youth who are already sufficiently prone to evil? No, Sir, that would be unnecessary; the greatest part of those young people, who will read this book (unless it should happen to come into a Grocer's shop) have already read *Horace*, *Ovid*, *Martial*, *Petrinius*, *Apuleius*, and, probably, *Aristophanes*: and what may appear still more strange, their acquaintance with these writers, who according to your sage principles are a very poison to the soul, began in the schools! Have we then said any thing new to these young people; and suppose we had? All the world knows that different constitutions, different laws, and

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different forms of worship, require and produce different manners. Nor is that any reason, why it may not be useful to know upon what maxims the thoughts and actions of people beyond our little horizon, in other climates and in different ages have been regulated.—“ And of what service would this be ? ”—Your pardon, sage Sir. You, indeed, who have engaged in a profession the end of which is to improve mankind, ought to know this ; and with submission you ought to have learnt it, before you had entered upon a calling in which it is so difficult to become a proficient.—But enough, you shall hear why this little digression was necessary. It is our intention in this place to draw the character of *Agathon*, and to draw it with rather more accuracy and exactness, than characters are generally given in funeral sermons—

You shake your head, *Mr. Theogiton*—Do not discompose yourself, such pictures

are

are neither intended for you, nor for those pious souls, who have put themselves under your direction. You must, indeed, avoid reading *Agathon*, and to say the truth, you will do well, not to read any thing you are incapable of understanding. But, you should believe, that there are many worthy people, who are not under your direction, and that some of them will read *Agathon*. That they will consider every circumstance in that natural and true light, in which clear and unprejudiced eyes are used to view them ; and will — notwithstanding your sighs — be edified by the history.—To such we have engaged to give a representation of *Agathon*, in a moral light. We mean here to give a picture of the soul.—You smile Sir—I suppose these words put you in mind of the soul as it is distinguished by points, in the *Orbis pictus* of Comenius. But that is not what I mean, my design is to lay open the most hidden recefies of his

his soul ; that we may come to the knowledge of the secret emotions of his heart, and the latent springs of his actions—“ A most excellent knowledge this ! And does this deserve so much pains ? — To know a heart, which as I could have told you by virtue of my system even from the first page of your book, was perfectly good for nothing.” — No more of this, I beg of you *Mr. Theogiton*; perhaps you are not thoroughly acquainted with your system : or—at least it is merely a system ! But let us put an end to this I beseech you. I perceive nature has denied you those powers, which might enable us to understand each other. I was to blame to talk to you of secret springs of action. You are only acquainted with one particular species of them, which is to be found among those pious souls, who have resigned themselves to your guidance ; these indeed are a better justification of your system, than any thing you might

might urge in its favour—Let us now return to our *Agathon*.

According to the most generally received opinions of his time, it would not have been very difficult to reconcile love and virtue to each other; even our young moralists may have a receipt for this purpose, or at least we may meet with plenty of them in every Bookseller's shop. But *Agathon* had more noble and refined notions of virtue—The ideas of a certain imaginary perfection were too essentially blended with the original composition of his mind, to be so soon or, perhaps, to be ever entirely lost. What is love to a delicate soul without enthusiasm? What is it, without that tender sensibility, that sympathy, which heightens, purifies and ennobles all its delights? What are the pleasures of sense without the Graces and the Muses?—The Socratic System of love may be very proper for many people, but for such characters as *Agathon* it is entirely

entirely useless. *Agathon* would have wished to reconcile to virtue that kind of affection, with which he had loved the fair *Danae*, and with which he had been beloved by her; but he plainly perceived all the difficulties of accomplishing this wish. At length it appeared to him, that this entirely depended upon the object of our affection, and then his heart immediately reminded him of his dear *Psyche*. Her image presented itself to him in such strong and lively colours, as it had never appeared for a long time, except in his dream. This image, made him blush, as much as if *Psyche* herself had been present; but he found with a pleasure, the very consciousness of which was itself a new pleasure, that his heart had returned from *Danae* entire to its first love.

His imagination now composed again like a clear and deep stream reflected the image of that chaste and virtuous joy, so infinitely

infinitely superior to all other delights which he had experienced from the tender union of their souls in those Elysian nights he had passed with *Psyche*. He felt again all he had formerly felt for her, with the addition of those new sensations *Danae* had inspired him with; but so tranquil, so refined, from the moral beauty of the object to which they were transferred, that they no longer appeared the same. He represented to himself, how happy he should be, if he were inseparably united to that *Psyche*, who had inspired him with a passion, which was so far from endangering his virtue, that it rather tended to increase it—He transported himself in idea with *Psyche* into *Diana's* retreat at *Delphos*—and fancied that the God of love the son of the celestial *Venus* completed the heavenly scene. A sweet presaging hope diffused itself over all his soul; it seemed as if a secret voice whispered to him that he should

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find her in *Sicily*. *Psyche* was exactly formed for the plan he had laid for his future life—What a prospect, did not the connection of his own private happiness, with that of the public, to which he had resolved to dedicate his utmost abilities, present to him. But he would first deserve to be happy.—And now my fair readers tell me, does not a man of such generous sentiments deserve to be happy?—Does he not deserve the best of wives?—Be contented, he shall have one as soon as we can meet with her.

A G A T H O N



# A G A T H O N.

## B O O K IX.

### C H A P T E R I.

*A Change of Scene; Character of the Syracusans; of Dionysius, and of his Court.*

AS we propose to attend our hero  
A to a new scene of action, it will  
not be improper to give those,  
who may not be so conversant in an-  
cient history, as they probably are in  
fairy land, some previous accounts of the  
persons they will be made acquainted  
with in this and the following books.

*Syracuse,*

Syracuse, the capital of Sicily, deserved in several respects the name of the second Athens. The character of the inhabitants of both cities was perfectly similar. Both were in the highest degree jealous of a liberty, they never knew how to preserve for any length of time, because they loved indolence and amusements still better than that liberty; and it must be allowed, that by the abuse they made of it, they had done themselves more injury, than they had received from all their tyrants together. The Syracusans were formed by nature for the arts and sciences; they were lively, ingenious, inclined to wit and raillery; violent and impetuous in their passions, but so inconstant, that in the space of a few days they would change from the utmost fondness to the utmost hatred, from the most active enthusiasm to the most passive indifference: these, as we know, are all striking characteristics, by which, the Athenians were distinguished from all the other inhabitants

inhabitants of *Greece*. Both these states were as ready to revolt against the good administration of any single man in possession of authority, as they were capable of enduring with the most abject subjection the yoke of the worst of tyrants. Both were ever ignorant of their true interests, and turned their own strength against themselves. Brave and magnanimous in adversity, in prosperity always insolent, and like *Aësop's* dog in the *Nile*, continually prevented by visionary objects from making a right use of the advantages that were before them. From their situation, form of government, and inclination to commerce, incapable of adopting the Spartan equality, but not less impatient of superiority in services, authority or riches in any citizen: hence they were continually at variance among themselves, ever distracted by parties and factions; till after a constant alternate transition from freedom to slavery, and from slavery to freedom; both of them submitted

submitted at last patiently to wear the chains of the Romans ; and wisely contented themselves with the honour ; one, of being the school, the other, the granary of this imperial mistress of the world.

AFTER a series of tyrants as they were called, that is of governors, who without waiting for the voice of the people, had seized upon the sole and absolute power in the state ; *Syracuse*, together with a great part of *Sicily*, at length became subject to *Dionysius* ; and from him, after a long reign, during which the *Syracusans* had shewn what they were capable of suffering, the government devolved in succession to his son the younger *Dionysius*. The right this young man had to the throne, he seized upon after his father's death (which he himself had hastened by a soporific potion) was more than doubtful : for his father could not bequeath to him a right, that he had not possessed himself. But a strong guard, a well fortified citadel, and a treasury

fury filled with the spoils of the richest Sicilians, supplied the want of a right, which otherwise, derives all its influence from power, that must confirm, and for that very reason can easily dispense with it. To this may be added, that in a state where the spirit of political virtues is already lost, where an unbounded pursuit of wealth, and the flattering privilege of doing every thing which can gratify the sensual appetite, (the only privilege which is as much encouraged by absolute power, as it is inconsistent with true civil liberty) in such a state, where these had gained the ascendant; a dissolute set of young people addicted only to the gratification of their passions, had good reason to expect infinitely greater advantages from the absolute government of one single person of their own turn, than from an aristocracy, in which the oldest and most deserving are employed in the affairs of state; or, from a democracy in which a dependant and precarious authority must

must be purchased with so many difficulties, cabals, disquietudes, and dangers, and frequently at the expence of one's fortune, that it seems not to be worth the pains it costs in the acquisition.

THE young *Dionysius*, by a concurrence of favourable circumstances, settled himself peaceably in possession of the supreme power at *Syracuse*; and it may be easily conjectured how a prince so ill educated, hurried on by the warmth of his constitution to every excess of youth, and surrounded with parasites, would make use of this power; sports, entertainments, amorous intrigues, festivals which continued for whole months; in a word, perpetual intoxication and debauchery, were the occupations of a court composed of trifling young men, whose principal object was to maintain themselves in the favour of the Prince, by the invention of new pleasure, and at the same time prevent him from ever returning to himself, and from perceiving the abyss, on the flowery borders

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ders of which he danced with such frantic security.

THE method in which voluptuous Princes govern, is too well known from ancient as well as modern examples, to make it necessary for us to expatiate any farther upon this point. What kind of government can be expected from a riotous youth, whose life is one continued festival of *Bacchus*?—who is unacquainted with the important duties of his station, and who dissipates those powers, which ought to be exerted in the fulfilling them, in nocturnal revels, and in the venal arms of a voluptuous courtezan?—who is careless of the good of the state, and is so inattentive to his own private interest, that he suspects and hates real merit, and lavishes rewards on those, who under the mask of the most zealous attachment, and most absolute devotion to him, are the most dangerous of his enemies? Who disposes of the most important offices in the state, at the recommendation of

female dancer, or of a slave who attends his person, who dresses and undresses him? What can be expected from a Prince who imagines a courtier that dances well, that knows how to set out a supper to the best advantage, and possesses the engaging talent of recommending himself to the favour of the ladies, must infallibly have also the qualifications of a minister or a general; or, that he who has the gift of pleasing the Prince, is fit for every office in life?—What is to be expected from such government, but a contempt of all laws human and divine, an abuse of the forms of justice, oppressions, mal-administration of finances, extortions, neglect, and persecution of virtue, and a general depravity of manners?—And what policy can there be, where passions, caprices, transient fits of ridiculous ambition, the childish pleasure of being talked of, the accommodation of a favourite, or the intrigues of a mistress, are the springs of state affairs, of the union or rupture with

foreign powers, and of every public transaction? Where, without knowing the true interests of the state, or its powers, without any plan, without a prudent choice and connection of means—but—we insensibly fall into the stile of declamation, which is not pardonable upon a subject so trite and so long since exhausted. May no man, who reads this, ever know from the experience of his native country, in what manner a people may be treated, who have the misfortune to fall a sacrifice to the arbitrary sway of a *Dionysius*!

AFTER what has been said, our readers will look upon *Dionysius* as one of the worst of tyrants, ever sent by heaven to chastize a people loaded with secret crimes, and thus indeed he is represented by historians. But a man intirely composed of bad qualities, is a monster that cannot exist. Even this *Dionysius* might have been capable of becoming a good prince, had he been fortunate enough to

be brought up in a manner suitable to the rank for which he was destined ; but he was so far from having received an education fit for a prince, that he had not even such as is generally given to every young man in a middling station. His father, the most dastardly tyrant that ever existed, suffered him to be brought up among inferior slaves, excluded from all good company, and the presumptive heir to the throne had no other means of amusing himself, but by making little coaches, wooden candlesticks, stools and tables. We should form a wrong judgment, were we to consider this chosen occupation of the Prince, as the consequence of a natural disposition ; it was rather owing to the want of objects and examples, that might have given a different turn to that innate inclination which every man hath and which displayed itself in him, of employing his genius and industry. Probably, if he had had a Homer given him to read, he might have

have made verses better than his father, who, among other follies, had the extravagance of desiring to be a poet. How many Princes have we not seen, who, with the disposition of an *Augustus* and a *Trajan*, have degenerated into a *Nero* and *Heliogabalus*, through the fault of those who had the care of their education, or through the incapacity of some stupid Monk, filled with the prejudice of the cloyster, to whose tuition they were committed?—Accurately, and fully to investigate the causes whence this proceeds, how it comes, that under certain particular circumstances, it is impossible, but that the best disposition, by such an erroneous method of education, must be distorted into such a mishapen caricature of morality,—this, we imagine, would be a very useful task, and therefore recommend it to the attention of some man of genius, who, to the lights of philosophy, joins a sufficient knowledge of the world. Our refined and

G 3 polished

polished age is not arrived to such a degree of perfection, as to render a work of this kind unnecessary; and if the execution of it were answerable to the importance of the subject, we make no doubt, but that it might be fortunate enough to preserve many nations from that train of evils, which probably threatens them in succeeding centuries, from the vicious educations their governors yet unborn will receive.

## C H A P. II.

*Character of Dion. Remarks upon him.  
A Digression.*

THE Syracusans were already too well accustomed to the yoke, to make an attempt to shake it off after the death of the elder *Dionyfius*. There was not even so much virtue remaining among them, as to inspire those who had better

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sentiments than the common people and the contemptible herd of parasites, with resolution to make their way to the ear of the young Prince, and acquaint him with those truths on which his own happiness, as well as the welfare of *Sicily*, depended. In all *Syracuse*, there was but one man, who had courage enough for this undertaking ; and he would probably have taken refuge in that same secure, though inglorious obscurity, in which men of integrity are apt to conceal themselves under a government which promises nothing good, if his rank had not given him a right, and his interest obliged him to concern himself with state affairs.

THIS man was *Dion*, a brother to the step-mother of *Dionysius*, and married to his sister : he was next to him in rank, and the only one whom great abilities, authority with the people, and immense riches had rendered formidable ; and who might be suspected either of a de-

sign to supplant him, or to re-establish the republican form of government. If we may implicitly believe historians, and particularly the virtuous and honest *Plutarch*, we must rank *Dion* among those few heroes and champions of virtue, who (to borrow an expression of *Plato*) have raised themselves to the honour and dignity of *good Dæmons*, or tutelary Genii, and benefactors of the human race;—who are capable of acting from the sublime motives of a pure love of moral order, and the general good, and of sacrificing themselves, in attempting to promote the happiness of others; since beneath that mortal covering which is visible to the senses, they bear a nobler self, which more strongly unfolds its innate perfection, the more the animal self is subdued;—who, equally great in prosperity and adversity, neither depressed by the one, nor borrowing any lustre from the other, but always collected in themselves, masters of their passions, and elevated

above

above the wants of common souls, are a kind of sublunary deities. Such a character is certainly very striking, it flatters the moral sense (if we may be allowed this expression, without being obliged to believe with *Hutcheson*, that the soul has a peculiar intellectual mode of discerning moral things) and induces us to wish that it might prove something more than a pleasing chimera. But we confess, that from important reasons, joined to constant experience, we are apt to distrust human virtues, — how much more then such as transcend humanity.

THE life of *Dion*’ it is true, affords proofs of great abilities, and especially of a certain elevation and strength of mind, which is observed usually to accompany fibres of a grosser and less delicate structure, and is connected with a kind of constitution, that disposes us to be unsociable, severe, haughty and reserved. A constitution of this cast is nearly allied, we know, to some virtues ; and if, as it un-

folds itself, by a concurrence of favourable circumstances it should be directed to those virtues; nothing is more natural, than that it should produce a character eminent for certain brilliant qualities, which finding no resistance from within to oppose their progress, attain a more than ordinary perfection. *Dion* possessed the virtues of this class in a considerable degree: but to suppose that any merit ought to be ascribed to him or any other person on that account, would be the same thing, as to impute to a wrestler the elasticity of his nerves, or to a healthy blooming girl, her colour, and the fine swell of her bosom, as merits which should entitle them to general esteem. Nay, if *Dion* had distinguished himself by those virtues, to which he was not inclined by nature; and had made such a proficiency as to practise them with as much ease and grace as if they had been constitutional;—but—how far he was from doing so much honour to the philosophy  
of

of his friend and master *Plato*, sufficiently appears from the letters of this philosopher, and the conduct of *Dion* himself in the most important scenes of his life: this he never could accomplish, or perhaps, (which is the same thing) he never chose to attempt correcting that austerity, that inflexible disposition, that want of affability in conversation, which is so disgusting to every body. In vain did *Plato* advise him to sacrifice to the Graces, and remind him that harshness suited only the character of a hermit; *Dion* shewed by his indocility in this point, that in general, philosophy makes us only avoid those faults to which we are not naturally inclined, and confirms us only in such virtues, to which we should have been disposed without it.

BUT notwithstanding this he was the man whom all *Sicily* looked up to. The propriety of his conduct, his aversion to all kinds of sensual pleasures, his moderation, temperance and frugality made

G 6 him

him the more esteemed, the more strongly they were contrasted with the licentious debauchery and dissipation of the tyrant. Every body was sensible that he was the only man capable of restraining him, and the greatest expectations were formed, if he would but take the government into his own hands, or give it to his sister's son, or content himself with being the *Mentor* of *Dionysius*.

THE natural insensibility of *Dion* to the charms of pleasure, which had induced the Syracusans to place so much confidence in him, secured him afterwards the favour of the Greeks on the continent, where he was obliged to take refuge from the tyrant. Even the academy itself, the celebrated school of philosophy at that time, seemed to glory in the privilege of enrolling in the list of her disciples, a man so nearly related to him, who possessed however illegally, the sovereignty of *Sicily*. The pomp of royalty he affected in his manner of living (so certain

is it, that even philosophers are frequently deluded by vanity) was in their eyes a mark of the internal dignity of his soul. They reasoned much in the same manner, as the lover, who from the personal charms of his mistress infers the goodness of her heart: they saw not, or at least would not see, that even this pomp, so different from the manners of a republic, was an indication, that his indifference to the pleasures of sense, was less to be ascribed to his superiority to the common foibles of the great and affluent, than to his want of inclination; since he suffered himself to be seduced by vanity, into a parade of riches, which being acquired by his connection with the tyrant's family, he ought to have considered among a free people, rather as marks of shame than distinction.

BUT whilst I embrace this opportunity of lessening the extravagant commendations usually bestowed upon the favourites of fortune, whenever they shew the least

least spark of virtue, I do not mean to deny, that *Dion*, with all his imperfections, would have been worthy of a throne, though he was incapable of managing a people with that gentleness, necessary to give his undertaking a favourable issue for himself and for them ;—a people, enervated by a long continuance in bondage ; a people, he himself, by the banishment of *Dionysius*, had placed in an intermediate state between slavery and freedom. *Plutarch* happily compares this nation, at the time it began to shake off the yoke of despotism, to persons who just recovered from a tedious illness, and apt too soon to consider themselves as restored to perfect health, impatient of submitting to have their diet regulated by the advice of a prudent physician. But we cannot agree with him, that *Dion* was qualified to be that physician. It is probable, that those ideas of morality and government he so much admired in the Platonic philoso-

phy,

phy, contributed in a great measure to make him much less qualified to be the reformer of an extremely corrupted people than another man would be, who had never acted according to such abstruse principles. The manifold experience of different ages and different nations has fully shewn us, that a *Dion*, a *Cato*, a *Brutus*, an *Algernon Sidney*, will always be unfortunate whenever they attempt to restore to it's ancient vigour a state long weakened and decayed by disorders of the most pernicious nature. To effect this, requires the assistance of several; and among a million of men we seldom meet with more than one of so extraordinary a cast. It is enough, if the end, (as *Solon* said of his laws) is the best that may be obtained in the circumstances that present themselves; if such men always aim at the best they can possibly devise, all means tending to accomplish this end, most certainly and expeditiously are the best; and it is sufficient if these men will employ

employ only such as are agreeable to the strictest rules of justice and integrity, which however, are often too much refined. Great, excellent, divine! --exclaims the enthusiastic admirers of heroic virtue.

—We would willingly join with them in this exclamation, if it could only once be proved to us, of what service this high-flown virtue has ever been to mankind.—*Dion* for instance, prepossessed with the sublime ideas of his master, was desirous of introducing into *Syracuse*, restored to liberty, a form of government, which approached as near as possible to *Plato's* commonwealth, and by this means to his own ruin, and omitted to give it that form it was capable of receiving. *Brutus* was concerned in the murder of the greatest of men, of one who was the best qualified to govern the whole world; because he came under the definition of a tyrant, with respect to the means he had made use of, to obtain the supreme power. It was *Brutus's*

intention

intention to restore the republican form of government. Yet another dagger for *Marc Anthony* (as *Cassius* with less greatness of soul, but with more propriety demanded) and streams of blood; the noblest blood of *Rome*, the valuable lives of the best citizens would have been spared, and the success of the whole enterprise secured. Should he, who had made the sacrifice of a *Cæsar*, to his own ideas of his country's good, should he have scrupled to have dispatched an *Anthony* after his majestic shade?—Should he have scrupled this, to have formed an enterprise as glorious as ever inspired the great soul of a Roman, of an action which unsuccessful as it proved, was condemned by his cotemporaries as a detestable assassination, and must be considered by impartial posterity, though viewed in the most favourable light, as the effect of frantic enthusiasm. But *Brutus* had his scruples, which arose from an ill-timed generosity; his authority decided; *An-*  
*thony*

thony thanked him for his life, and the platonic *Brutus* was buried in the ruins of a republic fallen beyond a possibility of recovery. Of what use therefore was his Platonism to his native country? We have, perhaps, dwelt too long on this reflection, but the observation that introduced it, old as it is, appears to be of importance, and to suggest several practical consequences; whose utility extends to men in all situations, and which, if more attentively considered, and applied with as much integrity as prudence, would appear still more useful to those in particular who are engaged in the work of government, and the regulation of human manners. If these things had been duly attended to, probably the eyes of those who neither see through a cloud, nor through a coloured medium, would have been spared the view of those trag-i-comic scenes exhibited by many well-meaning people, who exert all their powers with the most solemn seriousness in threshing mere chaff,

and

and after the labour of a whole year, are amazed to find that nothing but chaff remains at last;—the patriotic *Phlegon* would not have drawn upon himself so much uneasiness, which together with the ill success of his fruitless labours made him drink—himself to death,—had not his too violent zeal prompted him to attempt, by as violent a method, the sudden reformation of a republic so totally corrupted.—The honest *Macrinus* would not, at the expence of his liberty, perhaps, too of his life, have conceived the design of making a *Marcus Aurelius* of a *Caligula*.—The well-intentioned *Diophantus* would have perceived, what little reason he had to hope, by the powers of declamation, to bring people, who were even far from being tolerable men, to the perfection of angels.—But enough of a subject, which to be properly treated, would require a particular treatise.

How easy it is to lead the unsuspecting reader into a labyrinth of parentheses  
and

The History of

and digressions, when once a writer deviates from a scrupulous attachment to regularity ! We have long since apprized our readers, that we should occasionally indulge ourselves in this freedom, —and yet we are honest enough to confess, that neither in this, nor, indeed, to say the truth, in any other point, are we desirous of imitators. Not, that we are apprehensive, any one should complain of the want, order and connection in this critical moral history of ours; but because it is in fact, infinitely easier to write miscellanies, than a regular work, and hence it might probably happen, that a young writer, who for his own convenience should make use of our method, might expose himself to that question of Horace : *Currente rotâ cur urceus exit?* And if even this were not to be apprehended, yet there are several very honest people, who find it difficult to extricate themselves out of such wandering digressions, and to return whenever the author pleases,

pleases, to the point from whence they set out with him. Such readers, for instance, will say, what is it properly that has been said to us in this whole chapter?—Observe, Sirs, it is this;—that this *Dion* we have been speaking of, and for whom, I fancy, you care very little, would have been a very good kind of Prince, though not quite so great a hero of virtue, as a certain honest High-priest of *Cheronea* had conceived—or, if we should allow, even this, he would not still have been as useful in his situation, as you my readers are in your's, so long as you manage your household affairs properly; behave well to your wives, keep your accounts in good order, and attend to all other business of the same kind.—At last, I hope we understand each other.

years past in most instances he has been  
to such C. H. A. P. III.  
History of a man, who, in his considera-  
*A Proof, that Philosophy has as great a*  
*Power of Enchantment as Love.*

**T**H E previous information we are  
to give our readers, obliges us to  
lose sight of our Hero for a considerable  
time; but, in the first place, this is ab-  
solutely necessary for the right under-  
standing of what follows; and, in the  
next place, we have nothing at present  
of more consequence to say of him, but  
that he is going to offer a pious libation to  
the *Penates* of his friend the merchant, to  
be introduced to the acquaintance of his  
family, and after a slight supper, to repose  
himself from the fatigues of his voyage.

Dion viewed the extravagancies of Dio-  
nysius with the contempt of a mere spe-  
culative philosopher, who had no desire  
to partake of them, and with the discon-  
tent of a statesman, who perceived the  
danger

danger he was in of being gradually excluded from all authority and share in the government to which he had so just a claim, by a troop of young voluptuaries, buffoons, players, fools, who had no other merit but that of amusing the Prince. In such a state of things, patriotism had the fairest play; and the important motives of general good, the disinterested consideration of the pernicious consequences, which the whole state must be exposed to from the dissolute principles of such a court, concurred so powerfully with other private incitements, that *Dion* came to a fixt resolution of using every possible means to reclaim the Prince.

He judged according to the principles of *Plato*, that the ignorance of *Dionysius*, and the habit he had acquired of living with people of the lowest turn of thinking (though even among these there were some young men of family) might be the principal causes of his vitiated inclinations.

cinations. He thought himself, therefore, certain of his reformation, if he could but engage him in the best company, and inspire him with that noble desire of knowledge, which generally tends, if not wholly to suppress, yet certainly to blunt and moderate the sensual appetites of those who are animated by it. He therefore neglected no opportunity (and the innumerable faults daily committed in the administration afforded him enough) to represent to the tyrant the necessity of having about him men of the most acknowledged abilities; and he alledged so many reasons in support of his opinion, that among several sublime reflections, which were thrown away upon *Dionysius*, he at last hit upon the only idea which interested his vanity. This, however, engaged his attention but lightly, and though he constantly allowed the justice of *Dion's* observations, and always concluded the particular conversations they held upon subjects of this kind,

kind, with assurances, that he would not fail of making use of such good advice; yet would he with difficulty ever have been induced to consider them seriously, had not a trifling physical circumstance contributed to give to the representations of the sage *Dion* that force which they would otherwise have wanted.

*Dionysius*, on what occasion is not known, had given to his court, which in splendor, luxury and profusion, might vie with the Asiatics, an entertainment which historians tell us, lasted during three whole months. The most extravagant imagination cannot conceive any thing beyond the magnificence and expence on the one hand, and the riot and licentious freedom on the other, that were displayed during this long Bacchanalian festival; for so it might most properly be called, since after all other pleasures were exhausted, the last days, which happened in the season of the vintage, were taken up in representing the triumph

of *Bacchus*, and the whole of his fabulous history. *Dionysius*, who from the allusion to his name, represented the character of *Bacchus*, carried the imitation so far beyond the original itself, that it would have been impossible for the pen of an *Aretine* or the pencil of a *La-Fage* to excell him. The sources of nature were exhausted, and the vain desires of enlarging her limits—But we will not draw a picture, which in objects of this kind, with many persons, might not answer the end of exciting horror. Let it suffice, that *Dionysius* with the *Sileni*, *Nymphs*, *Fauns* and *Satyrs* his companions, made it impossible for any *Tiberius* or *Nero* of later ages to be any thing more than imitators of him. Who would imagine, that from a source so impure, the most ardent love of philosophy, and a reformation, which was the astonishment of all *Sicily* and *Greece*, could possibly have arisen?—But,—

“*There are more things in heav’n and earth—  
Than are dream’d of in our philosophy,*”

fays

says *Shakespear's Hamlet* to his friend *Horatio*.

THE most licentious disposition may at length be subdued in the same manner as that of *Dionysius*. Our Bacchanalians found themselves so totally exhausted by the intemperance with which they had sacrificed for so long a time to the Deities of festivity, and by the fury with which they had concluded their Orgies, that they were obliged to desist. *Dionysius* in particular, was reduced to so languid a state, that he neither hoped nor desired to act the same part again. For the first time since that enchanting moment when he saw himself in possession of a power, that enabled him to give a loose to all his passions, he now felt a void within himself, which he beheld with horror.—For the first time he now felt himself inclined to make reflections, if he had been able to pursue them. But he perceived with a lively sense of displeasure against himself, and against all those who had contributed

to degrade him to the state of a brute, that he had no resource within himself, to oppose to that disgust for all sensual pleasures, and that lassitude which preyed upon him. In the mean time, what mortified him the most was, that amidst those glaring objects which announced his apparent greatness and felicity, his present condition was a most wretched contrast with himself. In short, all the nerves throughout his frame were entirely relaxed, he fell into a kind of stupid melancholy, which all his courtiers could not laugh, nor his female dancers dance him out of.

IN this deplorable situation, which the natural impatience of his temper rendered insupportable, he had recourse to *Dion*, who during the three last months, had retired to a distant country seat: he listened to his proposals with an attention which on other occasions he never had been capable of, and received the advice of this philosopher with a desire of becoming

becoming as great and happy, as he was now contemptible and wretched in his own eyes. We may easily conceive, therefore, that he made not the least scruple of inviting *Plato* to his court, which among the other schemes his friend *Dion* proposed to him, was the one chiefly insisted upon: for in his present situation he might have been persuaded by the first priest of *Cybele* he had met with, to have sacrificed the better half of himself to become one of the *Corybantes*.

*Dion* was not a little deceived by his philosophy, in these plausible appearances of a perfect change of sentiments in the tyrant. He rightly concluded, indeed, that the phrensy of the last festival, had given occasion to this; but, from the prejudices peculiar to a philosophy, which is used to consider the soul and what passes in it too independently of the machine in which it resides, he erred greatly in not being aware that the good dispositions of *Dionysius*,

arose entirely from a physical disgust for those objects in which he had before placed his sole delight. He considered the natural consequences of satiety, as the effects of a conviction the tyrant now experienced, that sensual joys could not render a man happy; he took it for granted, that many reflections were now passing in his mind, which he neither had, nor was ever capable of having the least conception of; in a word, he judged, as we are always apt to do of the mind of another, by his own, and on this supposition, he raised an ideal structure of hopes, which to his great astonishment fell to pieces, as soon as *Dionysius*—had recovered his spirits.

THE invitation of *Plato* to court was a point, which had already been laboured for a considerable time; but the sage had formed many difficulties, and notwithstanding the interposition of his friends the Pythagorean philosophers in *Italy*, who had seconded the intreaties of *Dion*, he would

would have persisted in his refusal, had not the agreeable intelligence, which *Dion* gave him of the happy change of mind in the tyrant, together with the pressing invitations he received in his name, given him hopes of becoming the tutelary Genius of the Sicilians, and, perhaps, the founder of a new republic upon the plan of that he has left us in his writings.

*Plato* appeared then at the court of *Syracuse* with all the dignity of a philosopher, who from the superiority of his genius has a right to consider the great men of the world, as something less than his equals. For though at that period the sect of the Stoicks did not exist, yet the professors of philosophy already gave the world to understand with great modesty, that they considered themselves as a class of beings superior to other mortals. In this instance philosophy had the good fortune to make an appearance, the splendour of which answered the most elevated imagination of her votaries.

*Plato* was received as a God, and his mere presence wrought a change, which in the eyes of the astonished Syracusans, a God alone seemed capable of effecting. In fact, the scene that now presented itself to any one who had seen the court a few weeks before, resembled a work of enchantment—But—O ! *cæcas heminum mentes!* How natural do the most miraculous events appear, as soon as we become acquainted with their true springs !

THE first entrance of the divine *Plato* into the palace of *Dionysius* was celebrated by a solemn sacrifice, and the first hours they conversed together were signalized by a reformation which immediately spread itself through the whole court. In a few days, *Plato* himself fancied he was in his Academy at *Athens*, so moderate and œconomical did every thing appear in the Prince's household. A philosophical simplicity succeeded at once to the luxury of *Asia*. The anti-chamber which was before crowded with gay cox-combs,

combs, and buffoons of every kind, now resembled an Academic-hall, where none but bearded sages were to be met with, who either alone, or in pairs, with heads hanging down, and wrinkled brows, walk-ed to and fro, wrapped up in themselves and in their mantles, sometimes speaking all together, sometimes silent, sometimes talking only to themselves, and when, perhaps, they thought of nothing, putting on as consequential an air, as if the meanest of them was taken up with things of no less importance than the discovering the best system of govern-ment, or conducting the stars in a more regular course. The riotous banquets, in which *Comus* and *Bacchus* ruled all night with despotic sway, were changed into Pythagorean repasts, where with a single dish and a fallad, the time was past away in ingenious conversation on the most sublime objects of human understanding; Instead of licentious Pantomines, and the voluptuous sound of flutes, hymns

might be heard in praise of the Gods, and of virtue ; and when they had occasion to refresh their palates, they drank out of small Socratic goblets, wine mixed with water.

*Dionysius* conceived a kind of passion for the philosopher ; *Plato* must be always with him, accompany him every where, and give his opinion on every subject. The inspired imagination of this extraordinary man, which by the contagious influence of enthusiasm communicated itself also to his hearers, wrought so powerfully upon the soul of *Dionysius*, that he never was tired of hearing him : when *Plato* spoke, whole hours appeared shorter to him than they had ever done before in the embraces of the most practised courtezan. Every thing the philosopher said was so excellent, so sublime, so admirable—raised the mind so much above itself—cast such beams of divine light on the obscurer parts of the soul ! To say the truth, it was impossible

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but that the most familiar ideas of philosophy must have had the charms of novelty for *Dionysius*. To this we may add, that although like many others of his equals he was too vain to let it be observed, there was little of it he rightly understood, nor, indeed, could he have understood the whole, as even the inspired *Plato* did not always entirely understand himself. Let us farther consider the astonishing effect such rhapsodies conveyed in elegant language usually have on the ignorant, and we shall readily understand that nothing was more natural than that extraordinary attachment which *Dionysius* found in himself for this God of philosophers, as *Cicero* calls him, especially as he was handsome, majestic, and well acquainted with the world.

THE sudden desire of knowledge which appeared in *Dionysius*, diffused itself as suddenly among all his courtiers, when it was evident that he was in earnest.

though neither the oratory of the divine *Plato*, nor the epidemic influence of philosophic enthusiasm had any share in this revolution; not that they were really disposed to form their little apish minds according to the *Divine ideal model*, or that they were in any degree anxious to know what might be contained in the *Celestial regions*, but they pretended to be so; the taste for philosophy was the fashion; to please the Prince, it was necessary to talk metaphysics in mathematical language. None but philosophic mantles were worn throughout the court; all the saloons of the palace were in imitation of the Gymnasia, strewed with sand, on which might be described triangles, squares, pyramids, octagons, and icosaedrons; the figures *Plato* supposes his God to have made use of in the framing of this beautiful round world. Every class of men, even to the menial servants, talked philosophy, screwed up their faces into some kind of geometrical figure, disputed concerning matter

ter and form, entities and non-entities, the limits of good and evil, and the best model for a republic. All this, indeed, exhibited a very extraordinary appearance, and might have created a suspicion, that *Plato* rather appeared in the character of a vain pedant among a troop of beardless school-boys, than in that of a wise man, who has sketched out a great design, and knows how to adjust with prudence the means to carry it into execution, consistently with the circumstances of place, time, and person. But, this would be a mistake: *Plato* had little concern with the ridiculous extravagancies of the courtiers, though he saw with satisfaction that this useless bustle which he could not at once suppress, led them to amusements that might be considered as a kind of introductory exercises, by which they would insensibly be drawn off from their former customs, and by acquiring a taste for knowledge, be prepared for that general reformation he hoped

hoped to effect. But his chief endeavours were directed immediately to *Dionysius* himself; and as he meant to humanize and subdue him by the charms of his conversation and his eloquence, he endeavoured (without making it too manifestly appear) to fill him with a contempt of his former condition, to animate him with the love of virtue, and the thirst of glory; in a word, to inspire him with such sentiments, as would insensibly lead him of his own accord to think of throwing off a crown unjustly acquired, and content himself with the honour of being the first among his equals. Appearances promised him the most favourable success. *Dionysius*, in a few days, was quite a different man. His desire of knowledge, his docility in complying with the advice of the philosopher, the mildness and gentleness of his conduct surpassed all that *Dion* had expected from him. All *Syracuse*, at the same time, experienced the effect of this happy change.

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He passed with an incredible celerity from the highest pitch of tyrannic arrogance, to the popularity of an Athenian Archon ; he set apart some hours every day to give audience to every person with the most engaging affability, called them fellow citizens, and wished he could make them all happy : he actually began to establish several good regulations, and by so many favourable signs, excited the general expectation of a happy change, which was at present the object of every wish, and the topic of every conversation.

To such persons as may imagine so great and sudden a conversion of a Prince, whom we had represented as a monster of vice and extravagance, to be a thing beyond belief, it is sufficient for us to refer them to the unanimous consent of historians on this point ; but we can even do more ; we can make them comprehend not only the possibility but even the probability of it. Attentive readers, who

who have any knowledge of the human heart, will already have discovered the reasons of it in the former part of this narrative. In a situation of mind, when the passions are silent, when we are fatigued with the delights of sense, when the want of pleasing impressions sinks us into a disagreeable medium between existence and non-existence,—in such a situation as this, the soul is anxious to lay hold of any object which can recover it from this insupportable cessation of its powers, and is therefore more disposed to become sensible to the charms of moral and intellectual beauty. A dry analyser of metaphysical ideas could not certainly have contrived to render such objects agreeable to a man, who was as impatient, as incapable of close attention. But the eloquence of the *Homer* of philosophers could cloath his ideas in a dress so alluring to the imagination, knew how to interest the passions, and touch the most secret springs of the human heart with

with so much skill, that it could not but be pleased and captivated. To this may be added the tyrant's youth, which made his soul, as yet not entirely hardened, susceptible of new impressions. Why then, might it not have been possible in a few weeks to inspire him, under such circumstances, with a love of virtue, since nothing more was necessary for this purpose, than insensibly to supply his inclinations with other objects in the place of those he was now disgusted with—for in fact, his conversion was nothing more than that he now embraced a fair phantom of virtue, instead of a voluptuous nymph, intoxicated himself with platonic ideas, instead of Syracusan wine—and that the same vanity, which a few days before had excited him to rival *Bacchus*, and another Deity whom we dare not name, now flattered him with the idea of eclipsing as a governor and legislator, the splendour of the most celebrated men, of drawing the eyes of the whole world upon

upon him, of being admired by all, and deified by philosophers themselves ?

THAT this idea of the conversion of *Dionysius* is a just one, was actually evinced by the consequences ; and we think it might easily have been foreseen without the faculty of divination, that so sudden a change could not be of long duration. But how is it possible for men, who are concerned in any important action to judge of it with such coolness and impartiality, as spectators at a distance, who having the whole transaction laid before them, may, by a dispassionate enquiry into the connecting circumstances, very easily prove with great certainty, that it could not have happened otherwise, than they knew it did ? Even *Plato* suffered himself to be deceived by appearances, because they were conformable to his wishes, and seemed to demonstrate to him how much he was capable of effecting. His premature joy at the idea of a success, which he already looked upon as certain, did not

not allow him to represent to himself the full force of all those obstacles that might frustrate his endeavours, or to consider in time how he might prevent them. In the still walks of his Academy, surrounded with his docile scholars, accustomed to build up his ideal republic, he considered the part he had undertaken at the court of *Syracuse*, as more easy to perform than it really was. His conclusions were always justly deduced from his premises; but these supposed too much; and his example proves, that no people are more deceived by the appearances of things, than such as pass their whole life *inter Sylvas Academi* in the investigation of *Truth*. In fact, we have seen in all ages, how little speculative men have succeeded, when they have ventured to descend from their philosophical sphere, and appear upon the great stage of the busy world. Nor is it possible to be otherwise, as they first accustom themselves to invent laws for their *Utopia* and their *Atlantis*; and having

having settled such a system of legislation, they then form men, as they call them, who are compelled to act as conformably to these laws, as a watch from the internal power of its mechanism, is obliged to execute whatever motions the artist pleases. It was easy enough to perceive (and yet these sages were not sensible of it) that in real life things are quite different. Here men are always the same; and the chief point is, to consider those things that are before us according to all circumstances and relations, till we are capable of determining with the greatest possible accuracy what they are. As soon as you are acquainted with this, the laws by which you must regulate them, in order to obtain your end, occur of themselves—then is the time to make moral projects—but when, ye great luminaries of the present most enlightened century, when do ye imagine, that this time will come for human society?

C H A P.

## C H A P. IV.

*Philistus, and Timocrates.*

DURING the time that philosophy and virtue, by the eloquence of a single man, had produced so remarkable a change of scene at the court of Syracuse, the former intimates of *Dionysius*, were very far from being inclined to relinquish the advantages they had derived from this Prince's former character so readily, as their external behaviour might give reason to conclude. As subtle courtiers, they very artfully concealed their dissatisfaction at the signal favour he enjoyed with the Prince. Accustomed to suit themselves to his taste, and to take up every form that might be agreeable to him, or best answer their secret designs, they no sooner perceived this new caprice of their master, than they assumed all the outward appearance of a philosophical

sophical enthusiasm with the same ease as they would have put on a masquerade-habit. They were the first who sat the example to the rest of the court ; they redoubled their attention to *Dion*, whose authority since the arrival of *Plato* was greatly increased ; they professed themselves the admirers of the philosopher, and testified their approbation before ever he spoke ; all his plans and measures were wonderful ; and they found nothing to object to them ; or if they made any objection, it was only for the sake of information, and that they might have an opportunity of acknowledging themselves convinced by the first reply he should make of the superiority of his wisdom. They courted his friendship with a zeal that rather implied a neglect of the Prince ; and were particularly studious to obviate those prejudices which had been entertained against their former preceding administration. By these artifices they did not, indeed, entirely gain their

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end of making the wise *Plato* so perfectly secure, that he should not always entertain a just suspicion of the sincerity of their conduct; he observed them carefully, and though indeed they did not doubt that he would, yet it was easy for them to contrive, that all his penetration should be of no use to him in this point. They avoided every thing that might seem to give their actions an air of restraint, ambiguity and mystery, and assumed so natural and easy a behaviour, that a man must either be like them, or be deceived. This noble art is one of those, in which courtiers only excell. We may defy virtue herself to appear with greater dignity and decorum than these people have the address to display, whenever they find it conducive to the success of their designs, to assume her peculiar air, complexion and outward graces.

THIS observation relates more particularly to two persons, who were the greatest losers by this change in the tyrant.

rant. *Philistus* had hitherto been the minister in whom he had placed the greatest confidence, and *Timocrates* his favourite. Both of them, with unanimity that did honour to their prudence, had shared in his affections, in the supreme authority, to which he only lent his name, and in a considerable part of his revenues. Their mutual friendship was now more firmly cemented by the common danger. They disclosed to each other their apprehensions, their remarks, and their designs; they concerted together the proper measures to be pursued at so critical a juncture; and as they were fully acquainted with the tyrant's foibles, they proceeded with so much art, that they gradually succeeded in prejudicing him against *Plato* and *Dion*, without his observing that they had any such intent.

WE have already mentioned, that the Syracusans, from a disposition which characteriseth the people of all nations, had given themselves up with precipitate joy

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to the hope of recovering their antient liberty by *Plato's* means, and that the present change in the state was the subject of all conversations. To say the truth, *Dion's* views were directed to nothing less than this, in calling in the assistance of his friend. They were equally declared enemies both of tyranny and of democracy, and thought (with what reason we will not at present determine) that, under different forms and by different ways, they both terminated at last in the same point, namely, in want of order and security, in oppression and slavery. They were inclined to that kind of aristocracy, in which the people are sufficiently secured from every oppression, and consequently the power of the nobles, or as the Greeks would say, of the better sort, is restrained by indissoluble ties; in which the proper administration of the state is committed to a few, who are obliged to give the most exact account of their conduct. It was, therefore,

fore, their design to abolish tyranny, or, as it is called in modern times, a despotic government, from all *Sicily*, and to change the constitution of that island into an aristocracy. With a view of pleasing *Dionysius*, or in conformity to *Plato's* idea, that the most perfect form of government must be composed of a monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, they intended to appoint two kings over their new republic, who were to be invested with the same powers as the kings of *Sparta*, and *Dionysius* was to be one of them. These were nearly the outlines of their plan. They omitted no opportunity of extolling to the prince, the advantages of a legal government; but they were too prudent to speak precipitately on so delicate a point as the introduction of a republican system, or, by an untimely discovery of their design, to force the tyrant back into that wildness of disposition, which was natural to him

before

before Plato had fully inspired him with sentiments of gentleness and humanity.

Unfortunately, the people were not capable of so much moderation, and thought very differently of the use they should make of their freedom. Every one had a certain design that he kept to himself, the object of which was some kind of private advantage. Every one conceived his abilities as more than equal to serve the republic in those posts for which he was the least qualified; or had some small pretensions to urge, which he absolutely insisted should be complied with. The *Syracusans*, therefore, wished for a democracy, and when they imagined themselves just on the point of attaining their wishes, they spoke of it so openly, that *Philistus* and his friend had an opportunity of recovering the tyrant from his agreeable Platonic enthusiasm.

THE first thing they did, was to represent to him in very lively colours, and probably with circumstances exag-

gerated, the sentiments of the people, and their commotions, which though not outwardly apparent, yet fermented internally with so much the greater force. This they did with great precaution, at proper times, by gradual insinuations, and in such a manner, that it must appear to *Dionysius*, as if he himself had at last made the discovery: and at the same time they omitted no opportunity of bestowing the most extravagant commendations upon *Plato* and *Dion*, which they took care to couch in terms chosen with the most malicious artifice, to convey the idea of the extraordinary estimation in which they were held by the people. More effectually to engage the tyrant's attention, they contrived to insinuate in a variety of ways, though they did not appear to do it, that numerous private meetings were frequently holden in the city, to which *Dion* and *Plato* himself, or some one of their most intimate friends, were always invited. These meet-

meetings were only considered indeed as friendly and social entertainments; but yet they gave *Philistus* occasion to speak of them in such a manner, as if they had the appearance of political combinations, and this was all that was desired.

By these and such like artifices, they at length succeeded in exciting suspicions in *Dionyfius*. He began the rather to distrust the sincerity of his new friend, as he was jealous of the particular connection between him and *Dion*; and that he might the sooner know the truth, he thought it safest to engage afresh in his interest the long neglected *Timocrates*; and when he had assured himself that he might depend upon his attachment as before, to disclose to him the remarks he had made, and his secret apprehensions. The artful favourite affected at first to have no conception, that the *Syracusans* could seriously entertain such a design; at least (he said with an appearance of the greatest sincerity) he could not imagine that

*Plato* and *Dion* had the least share in it; though he must confess, that since *Plato's* arrival at court, the *Syracusans* were inspired with a singular spirit, and probably seduced by the Philosopher's extraordinary credit with the Prince, into those extravagant ideas they seemed to entertain. It might not, he observed, be impossible, that the favourers of a republican constitution, might hope to find an occasion, while the court had the form of an academy, insensibly to give the state that of a democracy; but he was obliged to confess, that he could not entirely rely on his own penetration in the counsel he should give to his master and friend in such delicate circumstances; but that *Philistus*, whose fidelity had been long known to the Prince, would from his experience in the business of the state, be infinitely better qualified to sift an affair of this kind to the bottom.

*Dionysius* was so little inclined to resign a power, the value of which he be-

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gan daily to be more sensible of, in proportion as his fibres recovered their elasticity, that the insinuations of his favourite had their intended effect. He charged him to use every precaution to introduce *Philistus* into his closet the same night with all the secrecy imaginable, that he might converse with him on these subjects, and hear his opinion. *Philistus* came, and completed what *Timocrates* had begun. He laid open to the Prince every thing he pretended to have discovered, and said just as much as was necessary to confirm him in the idea, that a secret conspiracy was entered into to change the government; which though probably not come to its height, was yet so far advanced, that it deserved attention. And who, said *Dionysius*, can be the author or chief of such a conspiracy?—Here *Philistus* seemed embarrassed—he hoped that it was not yet so far advanced, *Dion* discovered such favourable inclinations to the Prince—“ Disclose thy sentiments

ments freely, replied *Dionysius*; what is thy opinion of this same *Dion*? But no compliments, for thou needest not remind me that he is the husband of my sister; I know it but too well;—but I do not confide in him the more on that account,—he is certainly ambitious.”—Ever gloomy, reserved, concentrated in himself.—“To say the truth, he undoubtedly is so, replied *Philistus*, and whoever has sufficiently observed him, unless he had previously entertained a better opinion of him, could scarce help suspecting that he was dissatisfied, and was revolving in himself some project, which he did not think proper to communicate.”—“Dost thou think so, *Philistus*? replied the tyrant; I have always had the same opinion of him; if ever *Syracuse* is disturbed and busied with innovations, you may be assured that *Dion* is at the head of all.—We must observe him more closely”—“At least it is singular, continued *Philistus*, that for a considerable

able time past he seems to have made it his busines to secure to himself the friendship of the most respectable citizens"—(here he introduced some circumstances, which by the turn he gave them, might confirm his observation) "when a man of such weight as *Dion* condescends to affect popularity which is so totally inconsistent with his character, it may be presumed that he has designs—and if *Dion* has designs, they certainly are not for trifles.—Be this however as it may, yet I am clear, added he, that *Plato* notwithstanding the strict friendship that subsists between them, is a man of too much integrity to be concerned in any secret contrivances against a Prince who loads him with so many honours and marks of his favour."— "To tell thee my opinion, *Philistus*, I imagine that these philosophers who make so much noise in the world, are a very inoffensive kind of people; in reality I perceive nothing so dangerous in their philosophy, as is commonly imagined.

I am fond, for instance, of this same *Plato*, because he is agreeable in conversation; he maintains indeed singular opinions; a man cannot indulge a more pleasing dream; but even this diverts me; and besides one cannot deny him the merit of being an orator; it is pleasing to hear him talk of the island *Atlantis*, and of things in the other world, as circumstantially, and with as much certainty as if he had just arrived in the last ship that came from the moon." (Here both laughed immoderately at so ingenious a conceit, and *Dionysius* laughed with them) " You may laugh as long as you will, continued he, but you shall give me up my *Plato*, he is the best creature in the world, and if we consider at once his philosophy, his beard, and hieroglyphical face; we must allow, that upon the whole, he is that kind of person one may amuse one's self with for want of a better." —(O divine *Plato*! Thou who didst imagine that the heart of this Prince

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was in thy power ! Thou who didst think thyself capable of the great work of making him, a wise and virtuous Prince ! — Why didst thou not, at this instant, stand concealed so as to have heard this flattering commendation, by which he attempted to apologize to his courtiers for the partiality he entertained for thee !) “ It is true, replied *Timocrates*, the Muses themselves could not speak more agreeably than *Plato*; he might, I believe, persuade one to any thing, if he was resolved upon it.” — “ You will laugh, perhaps, replied the Prince; but I assure you he had lately almost persuaded me to quit *Sicily*, and undertake a philosophical journey to *Memphis*, and the Pyramids, to see the Gymnosophists, who, from his description of them, must be a strange kind of beings;—if their women are as handsome as he pretends, it would be no disagreeable thing to join with them in the dance of the spheres; for they live in a state of perfect beautiful

nature, and appear adorned only with their own proper charms, that is, naked as Sea-nymphs, with as triumphant an air as the most beautiful Syracusan ladies in their richest festival attire."—*Dionysius*, as it seems, was in a humour not very favourable to the sublime views of his court philosopher; *Timocrates* perceived it, and instantly formed a small project from which he expected particular success. But the more acute *Philistus* did not think it proper to encourage this volatile disposition in his master. He therefore interrupted *Timocrates*;—" You jest, said he, upon the effect of *Plato's* eloquence; it is but too certain, that in this art he has no equal; but even this would give me no small apprehensions, if he was a man of less integrity than I think he is. The power of eloquence is superior to every other power, it is able to set fifty thousand soldiers, at the pleasure of a single unarmed man, in commotion, or to enervate them. If *Dion*, as it seems, is meditating

ditating any dangerous design, and should find means to engage this insinuating Sophist on his side, *Dionysius* I fear will dearly pay for the pleasure of his ingenuous conversation. The influence of eloquence at *Athens* is well known, and the Syracusans want only two such orators to inflame their imagination with figurative and lively images, and they would soon wish to be Athenians themselves; the first man who would then place himself at their head might make what he would of them."

*Philistus* perceived that his master immediately became thoughtful at these words; he concluded, therefore, that something was revolving in his mind, and checked himself. "What a fool I was," exclaimed *Dionysius*, after he had seemed for a time pensive with his head inclined. It was certainly my good Genius that inspired me with the thought of sending for you this evening. My eyes are opened at once—to what have these people, with

with their triangles and syllogisms brought me ! Canst thou easily conceive that *Plato* with his engaging talk had nearly persuaded me to dismiss my foreign troops and my guards ? Ah ! now I see to what all those fine comparisons of a father in the midst of his family, and of a child on the breast of its nurse, and I know not how many others tend ! The traitors would first have lulled me to sleep with these childish tales, they would then have disarmed me, and at last, when they had so far fettered me by their pernicious maxims, that I should have lost all my powers, they would in good earnest have made me their child, their puppet, and whatever else they had thought proper ! But, they shall pay dear for their imposition ! This traitor *Dion*, I must—Is it possible then, *Philistus*, that thou canst be so simple as to imagine that he means only to dream of setting his fellow citizens at liberty. *Philistus*, he wants to govern, that is what he aims at, and for this

this reason he has invited *Plato* to my court, that while he is exciting the people to revolt, and forming a party in his interest, the philosopher might so frequently detain me in conversations upon justice, benevolence, golden times, parental government, and such like fancies, that I should be persuaded to disarm my galleys, dismiss my guards ; and at last, accompanied by one of those bearded boys he has brought with him, suffer myself to be sent to the Academy at *Athens* as a new disciple ; and there, among a troop of young coxcombs dispute whether *Dionysius* has done right or not, in being surprized by so poor a snare.” “ But is it possible,” replied *Philistus*, with an affected air of astonishment, that *Plato* could have been so weak as to give my Prince such an advice ? ” — “ It is possible, since I tell you that he has—I am at a loss to conceive, how I could let myself be enchanted by such a babbler.” — “ That, replied the insinuating *Philistus*, should not give you

you any uneasiness; *Plato* is indeed a great man in his way, an excellent man, to give a system of the world, or to prove that snow is not really white; but his maxims of government are, as it seems, rather dangerous in their application. This, indeed, would have furnished the Athenians with something to say, and would have been no small triumph to philosophy, if a single Sophist, without striking a stroke, by the mere magic of his eloquence should have effected, what the Athenians, with all their great fleets and armies, have attempted in vain."—  
"I cannot bear to think, replied *Dionysius*, what a simple figure I have made for this fortnight among these capricious dreamers; have I not given *Dion* himself an opportunity of despising me? What idea must they entertain of my compliance and docility?—But they shall soon see, that notwithstanding all their knowledge of mystic numbers, they have been greatly deceived in their calculations. It

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is time to put an end to the farce."—  
"Pardon, my gracious sovereign, interposed *Philistus*, we are still only speaking of bare conjectures: *Plato*, perhaps, however ill-judged his counsel may be, is innocent; *Dion*, perhaps, is so too, at least we have not as yet any proofs against them. They have their admirers and friends in *Syracuse*; the people are prejudiced in their favour, and it might be dangerous, by any premature step, to lay them under a necessity of having recourse to the protection of this people, who are now dreaming of liberty. Let them yet remain for some time in the pleasing imagination, that they have secured *Dionysius*: give them, by an artfully dissembled confidence, an opportunity of discovering their sentiments more clearly.—Suppose *Dionysius* should pretend, he had an intention of resigning his crown, and was prevented by no other consideration, than his doubts what form of government would make *Sicily* most happy:

happy: such a proposal would oblige them to betray themselves; and while we amuse them with Academical questions and projects, we might find a proper opportunity of dispatching the ambitious *Dion*, accompanied by his counsellor, on a journey to *Athens*, where, in peaceful tranquillity, they might lay the plan of republics, and give them every day what new form they pleased."

*Dionysius* was naturally passionate and impetuous; every idea that seized upon his imagination possessed him so strongly, that he entirely abandoned himself to the mechanical impulse it produced; but those who knew him as thoroughly as *Philistus*, seldom found much difficulty, in giving a new turn to his passions by a single word. On the first fallies of his inconsiderate fury, the most violent measures were the first that occurred to him; but he need only be made sensible that there was a shadow of danger, and the rising flame soon subsided; and he was as

soon

soon persuaded to fix upon such methods as were most secure, though at the same time they were the basest.

As we have before laid open the true springs of his pretended reformation, it will not appear surprising, that from the instant his passions were re-excited, he should relapse into his natural state. What in him had been considered as a love of virtue, and what he himself had looked upon as such, was the effect of accidental and mechanical causes; but that he should lay the least restraint on his inclinations, this was what his enthusiasm for virtue could not carry him to. The licentious freedom in which he had formerly lived, represented itself to him again with the most lively attractions; and he now looked upon *Plato* as a disagreeable tutor, and cursed the weakness of an attachment, that had transformed him into a figure so very different from his own. He was now but too sensible, that he had deceived himself, by a sup-  
posed

posed obligation he had thought himself under, of persisting in the sentiments with which this Sophist, as he now called him, had inspired him: he now represented to himself, that *Dion* and the Syracusans would think themselves authorized in expecting him to fulfill the promise, he had in some degree made, that he would for the future adopt a legal kind of government. These ideas were intolerable, and, by a natural consequence, his partiality to the Athenian Philosopher, which, independent of this, was already much abated, was changed into disgust, and *Dion*, whom he never loved, became doubly odious to him. Such were the secret dispositions which facilitated the admission of the insinuations of *Timocrates* and *Philistus* into his mind. He now went so far, that to his former confident he confessed himself ashamed of the part he had played for some weeks past, as it were under the tutelage of *Plato*; and it is probably owing to his  
false

false and vicious shame, that he spoke in such dishonourable terms of a man, whom, at first, he had almost deified ; and endeavoured to give such a ludicrous turn to the affection he had entertained for him : he therefore embraced the proposal of *Philistus* with the anxious impatience of a man, who wished to free himself as soon as possible from the effects of a disagreeable restraint ; and that he might lose no time, he began to put it in execution the very next day. He sent for *Dion* and the Philosopher into his closet, and told them, with all the appearance of the most implicit confidence, at the same time flattering them exceedingly, that he was determined to resign the crown, and leave the *Syracusans* at liberty to choose the kind of constitution that would be most agreeable to them.

So unexpected a declaration astonished them both ; but they soon recovered themselves. They looked upon it as the overflowing of an unsettled virtue, which

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commonly falls into agreeable extravagancies, and they hoped, therefore, that it would be easy for them to bring him to a sounder judgment. They commended, indeed, his good intention, but represented to him, how ill it would succeed, if he meant to make the people, which ought ever to be kept in a state of restraint, masters of a liberty, which in all probability they would abuse, to the great prejudice of themselves. On this subject they urged every thing that sound politics can suggest; and *Plato* in particular, proved to him, that the happiness of a state depended not upon the form of it's constitution, but upon the internal excellence of it's system of laws, it's good morals, and the wisdom of those to whom the dispensation of the laws was intrusted. It was his opinion, that there was no necessity *Dionysius* should resign the supreme authority, as it was entirely in his power, by observing exactly all the duties of a wise and virtuous Prince, to change

change an arbitrary government into a mild, limited monarchy; to which the people would the more easily submit, as from a consciousness of their own inability to govern, they would readily let themselves be governed, and even honour as a God, the man who protected them, and laboured for their happiness.

*Dion* did not entirely agree with his friend in this particular. The truth was, that he was better acquainted with *Dionysius*, and as he had little hopes that his good dispositions would be of long continuance, he wanted him as soon as possible to make such an use of them, as would deprive him of the power of doing ill, in case he should ever again have the inclination. He enlarged therefore with great force upon the superior advantage of a well-regulated aristocracy, to those of a monarchy, and proved, how dangerous it might be to let the welfare of a whole country depend on the accidental and hazardous circumstances  
of

of the monarch's being a virtuous man, or not. He proceeded so far as to maintain, that to expect a man in possession of supreme authority should never abuse it, was to require what was beyond the power of humanity; that we might as reasonably expect the wisdom and virtue of a God, from a being full of wants and imperfections who cannot depend one moment on himself. He therefore highly approved of the tyrant's intention of divesting himself of the regal power; but agreed with his friend, that instead of committing the regulation of the state to the choice of the people, he himself, with the assistance of the worthiest men in the kingdom, should immediately undertake the trouble of projecting a constitution that might be durable, and tend in the highest possible degree to the general good; in the execution of which he promised to lend the Prince all the assistance in his power. *Dionysius* seemed to approve of this proposal.

posal. He begged of them to reduce their thoughts on this important subject into a complete plan, and assured them, that as soon as they had agreed in their opinion what he ought to do, he would immediately set about the execution of a work, which he pretended was always in his thoughts.

THIS secret conference had a double effect on the tyrant. It completed his hatred to *Dion*, and restored *Plato* to his favour. Though he no longer heard him speak with the same pleasure as at first on the duties of a good Prince, yet it gave him great satisfaction to find that *Plato* was a professed enemy to popular government, and a friend to monarchy. He consulted again with his confidants; and told them, that the only question at present was how to get rid of *Dion*. *Philistus* was of opinion, that before such a step could be ventured on, the people should be quieted, and the wavering authority of the Prince firmly re-established.

He proposed the means to accomplish this with the greatest certainty ; and in truth there was no great difficulty in it ; for both he and *Timocrates* had represented the commotion in *Syracuse* as far more dangerous than it really was. *Dionysius* by his advice continued to express a particular regard for *Plato* ; a man, who was considered by the people, as a kind of prophet, who conversed with the Gods, and was inspired. Such a man, said *Philistus*, must be retained as a friend as long as he can be any ways useful. *Plato* does not want to govern ; he has therefore a different interest from *Dion*, his vanity is satisfied if he is treated with respect, and fancies he has some influence with the person who is at the head of the state. It is easy to entertain him in this idea as long as it may be necessary, and this will at the same time be the means of preventing him from forming a more intimate connection with *Dion*. The tyrant, who independant of this,

this, felt himself attached to the philosopher by a kind of instinct, followed this advice so well, that *Plato* was deceived by it. He affected in particular to have him always with him when he appeared in public, and to quote his maxims on all occasions, where they might produce any effect. Whenever he had done any thing, by which he hoped to make himself agreeable to the Syracusans, he pretended that it was in consequence of the philosopher's advice, though it was entirely owing to the suggestions of *Philistus*, who without his being aware of it, had regained a complete ascendant over him. He appeared particularly affable and gracious to the people; he abolished some taxes which were mostly oppressive to the lowest class of the citizens; he amused them with public feasts, and sports; he promoted to profitable posts of honour those whose credit was most to be dreaded; and cajoled the rest with promises which cost him nothing, and had the

same effect ; he decorated the city with temples, gymnasia, and other public edifices. These several changes were carried on with the assistance of his two confidants in so proper a manner, that *Plato* employed all his authority to gain over the hearts of the whole people to a Prince, who had raised such pleasing expectations of himself, and had besides flattered the philosopher's vanity (a motive this worthy sage would not perhaps have readily confessed) by so many public marks of superior esteem.

THIS plan succeeded entirely. The people, who not only in *Greece*, but in all other places, live in a kind of perpetual infancy, ceased to murmur ; they lost in a short time even the very desire of a change ; conceived a violent attachment for their Prince ; extolled the happiness of his government ; admired the magnificent cloathing and arms he had given to his guards ; intoxicated themselves with drinking his health ; and were ready foolishly

ishly to applaud whatever he meant to undertake.

THIS fortunate turn restored *Philistus* and *Timocrates* to favour, and re-established their interest with their master, but they were not satisfied as long as they were obliged to share it with *Plato*, for whom the Prince had yet a kind of partiality, arising perhaps from the natural superiority of a great to a little mind. *Timocrates* hit upon an expedient first suggested to him in a private conversation he had with the Prince in his bed-chamber, by which he hoped at the same time to ingratiate himself with the tyrant, and destroy the influence the philosopher had with him.

*Dionysius* at the instigation of *Timocrates* had insensibly begun to introduce a greater freedom at his table; the number and rank of the guests who were almost every day invited afforded a pretence for this; and *Plato*, who notwithstanding all the sublime severity of his principles, had

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rather a propensity to be a courtier, did as many respectable men are apt to do at certain courts; he took every opportunity of commending the advantages of sobriety and temperance, and in the mean time eat and drank like other people.

THIS little deviation from the too confined boundaries of Academical frugality, which the founder of the Academy himself must allow was not calculated for a court, gave occasion to the principal Syracusans, and to every one who wished to ingratiate himself with the Prince, to make sumptuous entertainments for him, in which an unreserved festivity prevailed, though seemingly restrained by the company of the Muses and Graces, the better to reconcile it to the austerity of philosophy. *Timocrates* turned this circumstance to advantage. He invited the Prince, all the court, and the first men of the city, to his country-house, to celebrate the return of the spring, whose all-enlivening

enlivening power, unfortunately for the platonism of *Dionysius*, which was otherwise but half established, seemed to revive the desires and powers of his youth. The most artfully contrived voluptuousness concealed under the most dazzling magnificence was displayed at this festival. *Timocrates* lavished his wealth with the greatest profusion, and the more cheerfully, as he was certain that by this means he should double it. Every one admired the invention and the taste of this favourite; *Dionysius* acknowledged that he had never been so well entertained; and the divine *Plato* who had never seen any thing like it, either in his travels to the Pyramids and the Gymnosophists, or even at *Athens*, was so betrayed by his poetical imagination, that he seemed not to be apprehensive of the dangers that lay concealed under the enchantments of this scene, and this variety of incitements to pleasure. *Dion* alone maintained his usual gravity, and by the strik-

ing contrast of his gloomy appearance with the general festivity, made such impressions upon every mind, as did not a little contribute to hasten his future fall. But no one seemed to take any notice of this at the time; and indeed the attention of *Timocrates* to make every hour and almost every instant bring on some new delight, allowed little leisure for observation. This artful courtier had discovered a method of flattering in a very refined manner *Plato* himself, upon an occasion, where it was so little to be expected. This was done in a grand pantomime *dapse*, in which the history of the human soul was represented in an allegorical manner, agreeably to the principles of this philosopher, under images borrowed from some of his writings. *Timocrates* had for this purpose chosen the most youthful and most beautiful figures which he could collect at *Corinth*, and in all *Greece*. Among the female dancers there was one in particular, who seemed well calculated

calculated to destroy in a few moments every thing that the good *Plato* had been labouring for some months to produce in the mind of the tyrant. Among the different characters in the dance, she represented that of sensual pleasure, and her figure, her air, her look, her smile, every thing was so perfectly suited to this part, that *Anacreon's* epithet, *breathing pleasure*, seemed expressly made for her. Every man was enchanted with the fair *Bacchidion*, but *Dionysius* more than any other. He did not once think of resisting pleasure, which had assumed so seducing a form, to re-kindle his languid inclination for her; scarce had he power to prevent the workings of his mind from being too plainly seen, for still he did not imagine himself to be entirely *Dionysius*, though at times some little strokes escaped him, which proved to the sagacious *Dion*, that he still was now only restrained by some remains of shame, the last efforts of expiring vir-

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tue. *Timocrates* exulted in the success of his design ; the too enchanting *Bacchidion* had made herself mistress of the desires, the taste, and even the heart of the tyrant, who saw the necessity that *Timocrates* should be the negotiator of his passion, which for a time he meant to keep secret ; and from that instant this courtier again became his greatest favourite. The wise *Plato* deplored too late, that he had shewn too much indulgence to the propensity this Prince had to pleasure ; he was now but too sensible that the strength of his metaphysical enchantment, was dissolved by a much stronger magic, and that he might not give himself needless trouble, visited the court less frequently. *Dion* went farther still, he ventured to reproach *Dionysius* with his secret connection with the fair *Bacchidion*, and to remind him of his obligations, with a zeal, which the tyrant could no longer bear. *Dionysius* spoke in the stile of an Asiatic despot, and *Dion* replied to him

him as a discontented man, who finds himself bold enough to set at defiance the threats of a haughty tyrant. *Philistus* restrained the Prince, who, when transported with rage, was capable of carrying every thing to extremity; but, as things were circumstanced with regard to the injured *Dion*, a sudden resolution was to be taken. *Dion* disappeared, and it was not till a few days after, that *Dionysius* declared publicly, that a dangerous conspiracy against his person, and the tranquility of the state, in which *Dion* was secretly concerned, had obliged him to remove him for some time out of Sicily. This was really the fact, that *Dion* had unexpectedly been taken into custody, put on board a vessel, and set on shore in *Italy*. To give an appearance of probability to this pretended conspiracy, some of *Dion's* friends and a still greater number of the creatures of *Philistus*, who were bribed to accuse that Prince, were secured. Nothing

was omitted that could make his trial appear to be carried on according to the proper forms of justice; and after he had been convicted on the deposition of a number of witnesses, his banishment was decreed by a formal sentence; and he was forbidden, under pain of death, ever to return to *Sicily*; without the particular permission of *Dionysius*. The tyrant pretended, that he signed this decree much against his will; compelled only by his concern for the public tranquillity, and to evince to the world, how desirous he was to spare a Prince, whom he had always particularly esteemed; instead of confiscating the whole of his estate, he limited the penalty to the seizure of his revenues. But no one was deceived by these pretences, as it was soon after known, that he had forced his sister, the wife of *Dion*, to give herself up as a recompence to the unworthy *Democrates*.

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THIS unexpected catastrophe obliged *Plato* to act a very degrading part. *Dionysius* affected, indeed, to be still a great admirer of his knowledge and eloquence; but his influence was so totally lost, that he was never allowed to plead in behalf of his friend's innocence. He was daily invited to the Prince's table, but only to hear with his own ears, how the principles of his philosophy, how virtue itself, and whatever is worthy of sound reason, was become the object of wanton raillery, which is often as offensive to good sense as it is to virtue; and that he might be prevented from having any opportunity of effacing the unfavourable impressions the Syracusans had received against *Dion*, a guard, under the pretence of a particular mark of respect, was set over him, which watched and confined him as a prisoner of state. The Philosopher had not so totally subdued that part of his soul, whose situation he himself has fixed between the breast and dia-

diaphragm, but that his indignation must be excited at this behaviour of the tyrant. He began to speak with the liberty of a free-born Athenian, and requested his dismission. *Dionysius* pretended surprise at this request, and seemed to use every argument to retain so valuable a friend ; he even offered him the most distinguished post in his kingdom, and, if we may believe *Plutarch*, all his treasures, if he would lay himself under an absolute obligation, never to quit him ; but the condition he annexed to these offers, proved how little he expected that they would be accepted ; for he required that *Plato* should sacrifice his friendship for *Dion* to him, and the Philosopher understood the tacit meaning of this proposal. He therefore persisted in asking his dismission, and obtained it, after having given his promise, that he would return, as soon as *Dionysius* had concluded the war, he was preparing to wage against *Carthage*. *Dionysius* used all his endeavours

vours to convince the world that they parted from each other as good friends : and Plato's vanity (if we can possibly suppose that there is such a passion in a Philosopher) was so well gratified by this, that he gave himself no concern to convince the world to the contrary. He went, as he said, to reconcile *Dion* and *Dionysius* to each other. The tyrant testified his approbation of this, and as a proof of his favourable sentiments, suspended the order he had made for seizing *Dion's* revenues. *Plato*, on the other hand, became security for his friend, that he would not do any thing in opposition to *Dionysius*. The separation afforded so melancholy a scene, that the spectators, (except those few who knew what was concealed under this mask) were much affected with the Prince's benevolence. He accompanied the Philosopher to his galley, almost stifled him with his embraces, wetted his venerable cheeks with tears, and fixed his eyes upon him as long as he could see him :

him: and thus they both returned with hearts perfectly at ease, *Plato* to his beloved Academy, and *Dionysius* to the arms of his *Bacchidion*.

THE tyrant, whose natural vanity was, by discoursing with the Athenian sage, inflamed to an immoderate thirst after praise, had, among other follies, taken it into his head to pass for a protector of learned men, a connoisseur, and even one of the beaux esprits of his time. He was extremely anxious, lest the Greeks, whom it was his principal ambition to please, should be induced by *Plato* and *Dion*, to change those favourable sentiments they had begun to entertain of him; and this apprehension appears to have been one chief reason, why he had loaded *Plato* with so many favours at parting. Nor did he stop there. *Philistus* told him, that *Greece* abounded in speculative idlers, of as great reputation as *Plato*, who were in some degree more capable of amusing a Prince at his table,

or in his moments of leisure, than one, who was weak enough to exhibit a ridiculously venerable composition of an Egyptian priest and a statesman, and to deal out his unintelligibly sublime chimeras, as principles by which the world ought to be governed. He proved to him from the examples of his ancestors, that a Prince cannot by any means more easily obtain the reputation of an excellent sovereign, than by taking Philosophers and Poets under his protection ; a sort of people, who for the honour of being his companions at table, or for the profit of a moderate pension, are ready to exhaust all their talents, without hesitation or reserve, for his glory and the advancement of his views. Do you believe, said he, that *Hiero* was that wonderful man, that hero, that demi-god, that model of all princely, social and domestic virtues, which he is esteemed by posterity ? We know what we ought to think of him ; he was what all Princes  
are,

are, and lived as they all live; he did what I and every other man would do, if we had been born to the absolute sovereignty of so charming an island as *Sicily*, —but he had the wisdom to retain *Simoneides* and *Pindar* at his court, who while they were well fed and well paid, strove which should praise him most; his liberality was celebrated by the whole world, yet all this renown cost him not half so much as the keeping of his hounds. Who would be a King, if Kings were obliged to realize every thing which is dictated to them as a duty from the couch of an idle Sophist, or the tub of *Diogenes*? Who would be a Sovereign, if Sovereigns were under an obligation of satisfying all the claims and wishes of their subjects? The opinion a great man gives of himself is the chief, if not the only point, upon which his character depends; it is not his actions themselves, that are material, but the forms and colours under which he exhibits them to the

the eyes of the public. What he either will not or cannot manage himself, learned heads will manage for him. Retain only in your pay a philosopher who can demonstrate every thing, an ingenious talker, who can jest upon every point, and a poet who can compose songs on every subject. The advantages you derive from this trifling expence do not shew themselves at first, though it is of itself a sufficient advantage for a Prince to be esteemed a patron of the Muses ; for this is an infallible proof to the greater part of the human race, that he is himself a man of great penetration and knowledge ; and this opinion establishes a confidence and a prejudice in favour of every thing he undertakes. But this is the least benefit that accrues to you from your ingenious pensioners. Let us suppose it necessary to levy a new tax ; this alone is sufficient to raise a general clamour in an instant against your government ; the malcontents,

tents, a kind of people which the most prudent administration cannot entirely extirpate, take advantage of such a time; set the people in commotion; inquire into your conduct, into the management of your finances, and a thousand other things which were never thought of before; the discontent increases, the representatives of the people assemble, a remonstrance is presented to you, one complaint succeeds another; insensibly the petitions are converted into claims, and these are supported with respectful threats; in a word, your repose is destroyed, at least for a time; you are so critically circumstanced that the smallest error may be attended with the most fatal consequences, and if at such a time a *Dion* should only put himself at the head of a dissatisfied multitude, you will then have a complete revolt. In this case the real advantages of our men of genius are evident. By their assistance all these difficulties can be obviated in a few days. Let the philosopher demonstrate,

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that this tax is indispensably necessary for the public good ; let the man of wit only circulate some ridiculous conceit, some facetious court anecdote, or disperse some scandalous tale about the city, and let the poet compose a new comedy to amuse the people, or a couple of ballads for them to sing. Every thing will then remain quiet, and while the idle politicians are disputing whether your philosopher has reasoned justly or not, and the little scandalous anecdote highly improved and embellished is engaging the wit of the politest companies ; the people will murmur a few curses between their teeth, sing their ballads, and — pay—. For such services, I think it is worth while to entertain a few men, whose sole ambition is to put words properly together, to number syllables, to tickle the ears and exercise the lungs ; men whose utmost wishes are satisfied, if you do but allow them a sufficiency to ramble, free from care, through a world, in which

which they have very few pretensions, and to enable them to do nothing else but indulge the whims of their brain, which they call genius, and this constitutes the greatest pleasure of their lives.

*Dionysius* found the advice of his worthy minister, perfectly agreeable to his taste. *Philistus* presented him with a list of more than twenty candidates, out of which, he told him, he might choose such as he pleased. *Dionysius* fancied, that it was impossible to have too many of such useful men, and therefore chose the whole number. All the beaux esprits of *Greece* were invited to court, under the most flattering promises. In a short time the anti-chambers swarmed with Philosophers and Priests of the Muses: all kinds of Poets, whether epic, tragic, comic or lyric, who had not been able to make their fortune at *Athens*, came to *Syracuse*, to tune their flutes and lyres on the pleasant banks of the *Anapus*, and—  
to eat plentifully. They imagined, that  
they

they might very well be allowed to celebrate the virtues of *Dionysius*, as the divine *Pindar* had not been ashamed to immortalize the mules of *Hiero*. Even the cynic *Antisthenes* was allured by the expectation that the liberality of *Dionysius* would enable him to study the advantages of voluntary poverty and abstinence with the greater ease; virtues, whose excellence, agreeably to the tacit confession of their most zealous panegyrists, are best commended after a hearty meal. In a word, *Dionysius* had the satisfaction, without having occasion for *Plato's* assistance, to establish an Academy for himself in the midst of his court, whose president and *Apollo* he condescended to be. Here the boundaries of good and evil, the origin of laws, the beautiful, the nature of the soul, of the world and of the Gods, and subjects of the like kind, which according to the most received opinion of men of the world, are of no other use but to afford topics for conversation,

sation, were canvassed with as much loquacity and subtlety, and as little sound judgment, as they usually were in all the schools of philosophy at that time. He had the satisfaction to hear himself admired, and commended for various virtues and heroic qualifications, that he never had formed any pretensions to. His Philosophers did not, like *Plato*, take upon them to be the censurers of the Prince, or teach him first how he should govern himself, and then how he should rule the state. The most rigid among them, was too much of a courtier, to find fault with any thing in his manner of life; and all of them were ready to prove undeniably to every one who had any doubts about it, that a tyrant who so liberally rewarded the dedications and congratulatory poems which were presented to him, who was so profuse in his entertainments, and made his faithful subjects happy with the sight of so many festivals and amusements, could not but be the worthest of Princes.

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THE court of *Syracuse* was in this situation, when the Hero of our history arrived in this city ; and such was the disposition of the Prince, to whom, from suppositions of a quite contrary nature, he was come to offer his services.

## C H A P . V .

*Agathon becomes the Favourite of Dionysius.*

A GATHON discovered most of the circumstances contained in the foregoing chapter, at a great feast which his friend the merchant gave the day after, to celebrate *Agathon's* arrival at *Syracuse* and his own return. The name of a guest, who had for a long time given the Greeks so much occasion to speak of him induced among other curious people, the philosopher *Aristippus* to go there, who was well received in the first houses at *Syracuse*, as much on account of the

agreeableness of his conversation, as of the favour he was in with the tyrant. This Philosopher had come with a great number of men of genius, from *Greece* into *Syracuse*, rather to be an attentive spectator, than with a view to turn by parasitical arts the vanity of *Dionysius* to his own advantage. *Agathon* and *Aristippus* had known each other at *Athenes*; but the enthusiasm of the former at that time made so striking a contrast with the coolness and pleasant method of philosophizing of the latter, that they could not, in fact, have any great esteem for each other; though *Aristippus* was frequently present at those meetings, which at that time made *Agathon's* house a temple of the Muses, and an Academy of men of the first genius in *Athens*. The truth was, that *Agathon* with all his shining qualities, was in the eyes of *Aristippus* a fanatic, whose misfortune he had often foretold to his intimates—and *Aristippus* with all his wit, was, according to *Agathon's* ideas,

a mere Sophist, whose principles were better calculated to make effeminate Sybarites become still more so, than to improve the virtue of young republicans. The impression which had remained with them from this opinion they had pre-conceived of each other, embarrassed them, when they met again so unexpectedly after a separation of three or four years. They experienced at first sight what we usually do, when we imagine that we know a person, without being able clearly to recollect who he is, or where and on what occasion we have seen him. That should be *Agathon*—that should be *Aristippus*, thought each of them to himself, thoroughly convinced that it was so, though they found it difficult to trust to their own conviction. *Aristippus* sought in *Agathon* the enthusiast that was no more, and *Agathon* imagined he found no longer in *Aristippus* the Sybarite, merely perhaps, because his manner of considering persons and things,

had for some time past undergone a considerable change. A conversation of a few hours explained to each of them the reasons of their former mistake, dissipated the remains of the old prejudice, and inspired them with a desire to become better friends. They insensibly forgot that they had formerly been less pleasing to each other; and their hearts were fond of indulging in the little self-deceit of considering what they now felt for each other, as the mere renewal of an ancient friendship. *Aristippus* found in our hero a complaisance, a politeness, a moderation which seemed to prove, that a variety of experience must have wrought a powerful revolution in his mind. *Agathon* in the Philosopher of *Cyrene* found something more than wit, a spirit of observation, a just method of thinking, a penetration and accuracy of judgment, which shewed him to be a disciple of the sage *Socrates*. These discoveries naturally inspired them with a mutual confidence

dence, which disposed them to be more communicative to each other, than is usual at a first interview. *Agathon* disclosed to his friend his surprize, that the expectations which had been raised in favour of *Sicily*, from *Plato's* credit with *Dionysius*, had been so suddenly and so inconceivably frustrated. In reality, all that was known in the city about this matter, consisted in mere conjectures, partly founded on a variety of uncertain anecdotes: anecdotes, which are usually carried about from one company to another, in cities where the court is composed of idle people, who are desirous of assuming the credit of being perfectly well acquainted with the secrets and intrigues of it. In the short time that *Aristippus* had resided at the court of *Dionysius*, he had studied so well the foibles of that Prince, the character of his favourites, of the chief persons in the city, and of the Sicilians in general, that without entering into an explanation of those

more secret causes we have already made our readers acquainted with, he could easily convince *Agathon*, that an indifferent spectator could not have expected any favourable issue, from the designs *Dion* and *Plato* had formed, to persuade *Dionysius* to a voluntary resignation of monarchical power. He described the tyrant in an advantageous light, as a Prince, in whom the most unfortunate education had not been able to destroy an excellent disposition; who was naturally humane, noble, generous, and at the same time so docil and easily governed, that his character would depend entirely upon what hands he might fall into. In his opinion this very irresolute disposition, and a propensity to sensual pleasures, were the greatest foibles of this Prince. *Plato* should have understood the art of making these very foibles in a delicate manner serviceable to his own designs; but this would have required a suppleness, a prudent mixture of relaxation

tion and restraint, which the author of *Cratylus* and *Timæus* could never have submitted to. Besides, he had made it appear too evidently, that he was become the governor of the Prince; a circumstance, which of itself alone was sufficient to spoil all: for the weakest Princes are always those, from whom we must most carefully conceal, that we have more penetration than they have; they would reckon it a shame to suffer themselves to be governed by a man of the first understanding in the world, as soon as they think he has such a design; and hence it happens, that they often rather submit to the infamous government of a chambermaid or a mistress, who have the skill of concealing the power they have over a man's mind, under the mask of servile flatteries, or artful carelessness. *Plato* was too refined to be a minister to a young Prince, and too far advanced in years to be a favourite: besides, his intimate friendship with *Dion* was injurious to

him, as it furnished his secret enemies with continual opportunities of rendering him suspicious to the Prince. In short, the idea of changing the monarchy of *Sicily* into a Platonic republic, was in itself an idle imagination. The national character of the Sicilians was a mixture of so many bad qualities, that in his opinion, it was impossible for the wisest legislator to transform them to virtuous republicans ; and *Dionysius*, who in certain circumstances would have been capable of becoming a good Prince, if in a fit of visionary magnanimity, he had suffered himself to be persuaded to abolish despotism, would always have been a very bad citizen. These general reasons, whatever might have been the more immediate causes of *Dion's* banishment, and the disgrace, or at least the departure of *Plato*, are sufficient to make us conceive, that matters could not have happened otherwise. But they shew likewise (added *Aristippus* with seeming indifference)

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that another person, who may know how to profit by the mistakes of his predecessor, will easily remove those unworthy people, who have restored themselves to the possession of the tyrant's confidence and authority.

AGATHON found these opinions of his new friend so probable, that he persuaded himself to believe them true: and here his vanity played him a little trick which he was not aware of. She insinuated so softly the idea—how delightful it would be, if *Agathon* could effect what *Plato* had undertaken in vain; that he thought her inspiration was, perhaps, the voice of his Genius, or of virtue itself. The attempt at least appeared to be noble; and he felt a kind of presaging consciousness, that such an undertaking would be within the reach of his abilities. These sensations (for they were not as yet opinions) were excited in him while *Ariippus* spoke; but he took great care not to let him perceive them, and left him.

should be discovered unawares by so subtle a courtier, he changed the discourse to other subjects. He especially avoided every thing that might particularly attract the attention of the company towards him; and he was the more cautious on this head, as he perceived that they expected to find him an extraordinary man. He spoke with great modesty, and only when he could not avoid it, on the share he had had in the administration at *Athens*; he took no notice of the baits which some people threw out artfully (at least as they imagined) in order to induce him to give his opinion upon political matters, and upon the affairs of the *Syracusans*. He talked of every thing as a common man who understands what he is speaking of, and contented himself with letting it occasionally be seen, that he was a connoisseur in all matters of taste and elegance, though he professed only to be an admirer of them. This behaviour, which was meant to remove

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all suspicion, that he was come to Syracuse with any particular views; succeeded so well, that most of those who came there full of expectation and highly prejudiced in his favour, imagined themselves deceived, and returned in the opinion that *Agathon* was far from being equal to the idea fame had given of him.. And in revenge for his not being what in com-  
plaisance to their imagination he ought to have been, they attributed to him some failings he had not, and lessened the value of those fine qualities, he either could not or would not conceal.. The usual behaviour of little minds, by which they endeavour to confirm each other in the comfortable persuasion, that there is no such great difference, or perhaps none at all between them, and such men as *Agathon*—and who would be so unreasonable as to take this amiss of them ?

As soon as our hero was alone, he gave himself up to those reflections which were the most natural in his pre-

sent situation. When he had been informed that *Plato* was gone, and that *Dionysius* was again under the influence of his former favourites, and of a new female dancer, his first thought was to stay only a few days longer in private with his friend, and then to pass over into *Italy*, where he had several reasons to expect that he should be well received at the house of the celebrated *Archytas* at *Tarentum*. But his conversation with *Aristippus* made him alter his intention. The more he reflected on what this philosopher had told him concerning the causes of the preceding changes, the more did he find himself encouraged to enter upon that business *Plato* had given up, in a different manner, and as he hoped with better success. Agitated with a thousand different thoughts, he passed the greatest part of the night between resolution and uncertainty, till at length he concluded to wait, and let the circumstances that might occur decide

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for him. But in case *Dionysius* should wish to draw him to court, he settled in the mean time a plan of administration ; he represented to himself a number of events that might happen, and resolved upon the measures he would pursue in each of these circumstances. These measures were the result of the strictest connection of prudence with integrity. His own private interest in these affairs had not the least share of his consideration ; this point was totally foreign to the whole system ; he would not suffer himself to be confined by any agreement, but would ever reserve the liberty of retiring with honour, as soon as he should perceive that his labours were ineffectual. This was the only particular in which he had an eye to himself in this whole affair. The great aversion which from his own experience he had conceived against all popular governments, did not allow him to think of assisting the Sicilians in the attainment of a freedom that he considered as

as a mere name, under the sanction of which the nobles and the common people alternately tyranized over each other in a greater degree, than any one single tyrant is capable of doing, who however flagitious he may be, is still prevented by his own private interest, from destroying his slaves entirely:—While the people on the contrary, when once they are in possession of power, are incapable of setting any bounds to their extravagant passions. This reflection, indeed, concerned only Democracy; but Agathon had no better opinion of Aristocracy. An endless succession of bad monarchs appeared to him something impossible in nature; and one single good Prince, was, according to his principles, capable of fixing the happiness of his people for many centuries: Aristocracy on the contrary, could not in his opinion be established upon a durable foundation any otherwise than by a total oppression of the people; and for this single reason was the

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worst of all possible constitutions. Highly prejudiced as he was against these two modes of government, he could not hit upon the expedient of blending them together, and, of attempting, by a kind of political chemistry, to produce one good composition from such opposite things. Such a government appeared to him too complicated, and composed of so many springs and wheels, that it would be every instant in danger of falling into disorder, and gradually destroying itself. Monarchy therefore, considered, on all sides, appeared to him the most simple, the most noble mode of governing mankind, as well as the most analogous to the great system of nature. These circumstances presupposed, he thought he should do every thing if he could but rescue a Prince wavering between vice and virtue, out of the hands of evil counsellors; if he could but improve his turn of thinking by a prudent use of the influence he hoped to obtain over him; and gradually

dually win him entirely by the genuine charms of virtue. And even supposing he should only meet with a partial success, yet still he hoped, by the ascendant he should gain over his master's heart, to be capable of doing a great deal of good, and preventing much evil; and this he thought would enable him at the conclusion of the piece, to retire from the stage with the rewarding consciousness of having well performed a capital character. In the midst of these agreeable and flattering reflections, *Agathon* at last fell asleep. He was still in that state, when *Aristippus* returned to him the next morning, to give him an invitation from *Dionysius*, and to introduce him to that Prince.

THE light in which this philosopher appears in the present history, agrees as little with the common prejudice entertained against him, as this prejudice does with the most incontestable accounts we have received of his life and opinions.

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In fact that prejudice seems rather founded on a misunderstanding of his principles, and on some scandalous anecdotes, related to his enemies by *Diogenes Laertius*, and *Athenaeus*, two of the most improbable compilers in the world, than on any circumstance, that could justly withdraw our esteem from him. There have been men at all times, who are virtuous only in their writings ; men, who wish to conceal the corruption of their hearts, and their secret vices, by an affectation of the most rigid principles of morality ; moral pantomine characters, *qui Curios simulant & Bacchanalia vivunt* ; men, who pretend to an extraordinary nicety of ear in moral subjects, and seized with sacred horror, redden or turn pale at the mere sound of the word *voluptuousness* ; men, in a word, who would be universally despised, if the greatest part of mankind were not condemned to suffer themselves to be deceived by a hypocritical face, mein, gestures, inflexions of  
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the voice, eyes turned up, and—white handkerchiefs. These excellent persons, (whom we describe somewhat more accurately, that there should no longer be a necessity of setting a mark on their foreheads, in order to warn people not to come too near them) exerted even at that time their utmost endeavours to proclaim the good *Aristippus* as a voluptuary, whose philosophy consisted entirely in making principles of our sensual appetites, and reducing the art of living conveniently and agreeably into a system.

IT is not here the proper place to prove the injustice and the falsity of this opinion ; neither is this so necessary, since one of the most respectable and most deserving literati of our age, a man who by the excellency of his understanding, and of his heart, deserves, if any mortal can deserve it, the name of a sage ; notwithstanding his situation, has already had the courage to justify this  
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worthy Disciple of *Socrates* in his critical history of philosophy.

WITHOUT paying any attention therefore to the principles of *Aristippus*, we shall content ourselves with saying as much of his personal character as is necessary to be known, in order to form a more competent judgment of the part he acted at the court of *Dionysius*. Among all the pretended sages who then appeared at that court, he was the only one who had not any private views on the generosity of the Prince; though he made no scruple of receiving presents from him, which he did not purchase by any parasitical meanness. Equally removed from ambition and avarice by his natural turn of thinking, as well as by the easy turn of his philosophy, he availed himself of a competent family estate (which he had occasionally found the means of improving by the commendable advantage he drew from his talents) in order to live according to his inclination, rather as a

spectator

spectator than an actor upon the theatre of the world. As he was a man of the first abilities in his time, this freedom which he reserved to himself during the whole course of his life, gave him the opportunity of acquiring a degree of penetration that made him judge with acuteness and precision of all objects of human life. Master over his own passions which were not naturally violent; free from every kind of care, and even from the tumult of business, it was not difficult for him ever to preserve that calmness of mind, that tranquillity of disposition which constitutes the basis of a wise man's character. He had passed his younger years at *Athens*, in the society of *Socrates*, and the greatest men of that celebrated period; an *Euripides*, an *Aristophanes*, a *Phidias*, a *Polygnotus*, and to say the truth, a *Phryne* also, and a *Lais*, ladies whose beauty was the least of their charms, had formed his understanding. They had unfolded in him every refined sensibility

sensibility for the beautiful, which had taught him to unite the sprightliness of the Graces with the severity of philosophy in that inimitable manner which drew upon him the envy of all the philosophers of his time. Nothing surpassed the agreeableness of his conversation; no man knew so well how to introduce philosophy under the pleasing appearance of smiling facetiousness and good humour, into companies where she would have been disliked in her own proper form. He possessed the secret of making the most disagreeable truths supportable even to the Great, with the assistance of a jest or a lively turn; and of avenging himself on the tiresome race of fools and coxcombs, with which the court of the Prince at that time was swarming, by a kind of ridicule, which they were stupid enough to receive with grateful smiles as a mark of approbation. From the vivacity of his genius, and the knowledge he had of all the fine arts, few persons

persons could vie with him in the invention of ingenious diversions, in the ordering of a feast, in the decoration of a house, or in giving an opinion upon the composition of the poets, and musicians, or the works of the painters and statuaries. He loved pleasure because he loved the beautiful; and on the same principle he also loved virtue: but pleasure must throw itself in his way, and virtue must not impose upon him any duties of too severe a nature; his attachment did not carry him so far as to induce him to sacrifice his convenience either to the one or to the other. His chief principle, and that which he always strictly adhered to, was that it is in our power to be happy in every situation, except in the burning-bull of *Phalaris*; and there indeed he could not form any idea, how it was possible that a man should be happy. He supposed the soul and body to be in a sound state, and maintained, that in that case it depended entirely

entirely upon mankind to accommodate themselves to circumstances; instead of desiring, as the generality do, that circumstances should accommodate themselves to them, or endeavouring to compel them to this end. From this peculiar pliancy of his temper, he acquired that equivocal praise bestowed upon him by *Horace*, “that all dispositions, all circumstances of favourable or adverse fortune, were equally acceptable to him;” or as *Plato* said of him, that it was given to him alone, to wear a garment of purple, or a covering of sack-cloth, with the same satisfaction.

It is no trifling proof how little was wanting to make *Dionysius* capable of relishing virtue, that he had a greater esteem for *Aristippus* on account of all these qualifications, than for all the other learned men of his court; that he was delighted with having this Philosopher near him, and frequently suffered himself by a jest from him to be influenced to good actions,

tions, to which his pedants with all their logic and scholastic eloquence would never have been able to persuade him.

THESE characteristic marks of the Philosopher being settled, it appears to us, that there is not a more probable reason to be given, why *Aristippus*, as soon as he saw our Hero at *Syracuse*, resolved to bring him into favour with *Dionysius*, than this, that he was curious to see the issue of such a connection, and in what manner *Agathon* would behave in so slippery a situation. For in this he could have no views of any particular advantages for himself, as he might without the interposition of any other person, have derived them from the favour of a Prince, who in a fit of ostentatious generosity, was capable of making a present of the revenues of a whole city to a rope dancer or player upon the lute.

BE this as it will, it is certain that *Aristippus* had nothing more at heart, than on the following morning to entertain

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the Prince, whom he usually attended at his rising, with an account of the newly-arrived *Agathon*, and to give so advantageous a description of him, that *Dionysius* was anxious to be personally acquainted with so extraordinary a man. *Aristippus* therefore received a commission to bring him immediately to court; and he executed it, without letting *Agathon* know how great a share he had in exciting this curiosity in the Prince.

*AGATHON* considered this early invitation as a good omen, and made no scruple of accepting it. He therefore appeared before *Dionysius*, who received him among his courtiers in a very polite manner. On this occasion he experienced again, that beauty is a silent recommendation to all persons who have the advantage of sight. The resemblance he bore to the *Apollo* in the Vatican, which had already been the cause of so much good—and so much evil—to him; which had drawn upon him the pursuits of the

Pythonesse and the attachment of the Athenians, which in the eyes of the Thracian Bacchanalians, had made him a God, and in those of the beautiful *Danae*, the most amiable of men:—That figure, that engaging countenance, that grace combined with dignity and decorum, which was peculiar to all his motions and actions,—had their effect, and attracted at first sight the general admiration. *Dionysius*, who as a king was too well satisfied with himself to be jealous of a private man, on account of any excellence he might possess, gave himself up to the agreeable impression this beautiful stranger made upon him. The Philosophers hoped that the internal qualities of the mind would not be answerable to so promising an external form; and this hope enabled them to whisper to each other, with a sneer, which shewed how trifling a value they set upon such a pre-eminence, that he—was handsome. But  
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the courtiers with difficulty concealed their uneasiness, that they could not find any faults, which might render the sight of so many excellencies supportable to them. Such at least were the observations which the cool *Aristippus* thought he could make upon this occasion.

AGATHON united in his conversation and in his whole behaviour so much modesty and prudence, with that noble ease and confidence of a man of the world, which he had acquired completely at *Smyrna*, that in a few hours *Dionysius* was entirely prejudiced in his favour. We know how little is frequently required to please the great, if the first impression is but favourable to us. *Agathon* must therefore be more pleasing to *Dionysius*, who was really a man of taste, than any other person he had ever seen before; and this satisfaction must continue constantly increasing in proportion, as the qualifications and talents of our Hero gradually unfolded themselves. He possessed indeed

deed so many talents, that the envy of the courtiers, which rose continually as he displayed them, was in some measure excusable. These good people would have thought very highly of themselves, if they had but possessed in so perfect a degree any one of those qualifications singly, which were all combined in him, and yet constituted the least part of his worth. He had the prudence at first to conceal his more important qualities, and to shew himself merely in that light which might most surely engage the esteem of men of the world. He spoke of every thing with that quickness of wit, which only glides over objects, and by which the shallowest persons in the world frequently (for a time at least) acquire the credit of understanding and knowledge. He rallied ; he told his story agreeably ; he furnished others with opportunities of displaying their talents ; and admired the strokes of wit, which among a number of indifferent and insipid things sometimes

times fell from the talkative *Dionyfius*, in a manner which without calling his sincerity or his taste in question, convinced this Prince, that *Agathon* had an infinite deal of understanding.

GREAT people have generally a favourite weakness, which makes it easy to find the way into their heart. The great *Tanzai* of *Shehian*, in other respects a man who knew how to judge of merit, acknowledged that there was no greater perfection than playing well upon the harp. *Dionyfius* was so prejudiced in favour of the lute, that the best player upon this instrument was in his eyes the greatest man upon earth. He was not indeed himself a performer, but he called himself a connoisseur, and boasted that the most capital performers upon this wonderful instrument were at his court. *Agathon* had fortunately learnt to strike the lute at *Delphos*, and had received some lessons, which had made him a proficient in that art, from the beautiful

*Danae*, who was a perfect mistress of all the string instruments in use at that time. In a word, *Agathon*, the third or fourth time he supped with *Dionysius*, took up a lute, accompanied a dithyrambic of *Damon's* (which was sung by a fine voice, and danced by the charming *Bacchidion*) and threw the Prince into such immoderate raptures, that the whole court from that instant concluded, they should soon see him raised to the dignity of a declared favourite. *Dionysius* in the first transport of his admiration loaded our hero with caresses, which almost disconcerted him. Heavens! thought he, what shall I do with a monarch, who is ready to raise to the helm of the state the first stranger that comes who is a good player on the lute? This first idea was a very true one, and would have spared him much uneasiness if he had followed it's suggestions. But another idea (was this his vanity, or was it his unwillingness to give up a great design for so contemptible

ib'e a reason?—Or was it that weakness which inclines us to view with indulgent eyes all the follies of the great who shew any esteem for us?) Another idea I say, insinuated to him, that a taste for music, and a particular predilection for any one instrument, was a circumstance that depended upon our organization; and that he should more easily secure an ascendant over his Prince's heart, the more he was possessed of that skill by which his approbation could be obtained.

THE favour he gained with the tyrant in so short a time, and by such ambiguous merits, rose soon after, on occasion of an academic meeting which *Dionysius* proposed to celebrate with great solemnity, to such a height, that *Philistus* who had hitherto wavered between fear and hope, now looked upon his disgrace as certain.

*Dionysius* had learnt from *Aristippus* in confidence, that *Agathon* had formerly been a scholar of *Plato*, and during the

time of his good fortune at Athens had been considered as one of the greatest orators in this garrulous republic. Rejoiced at the discovery of one perfection more in his new favourite, he delayed not an instant to contrive an opportunity which might enable him to judge from his own penetration of the truth of this report; for it appeared to him quite supernatural, that so handsome a man, and so capital a performer upon the lute, should at the same time be a philosopher. The Academy was therefore ordered to assemble, and all *Syracuse* was invited to this meeting as to a festival, which was to terminate in a grand entertainment. *Agathon* had not the least conception that he was intended to be a party concerned in this contest between a multitude of Sophists, whom he considered not without reason as a very superfluous set of men at the court of a good Prince; and *Aristippus*, from the fore-mentioned motive which had regulated all his behaviour

viour to our hero, had not discovered to him the views of *Dionysius*. This monarch as president of the Academy (for his vanity was not satisfied with the honour of being it's patron) opened the council with a speech richly adorned with platonick philosophy ill put together, and not very intelligible. This speech, it may readily be imagined, was received with universal shouts of applause; though it seemed to convince *Agathon* rather of the undoubted confidence the royal orator had of being approved on account of his high rank, than of the excellence of his qualifications and erudition. At the conclusion of this oration the philosophical contest began; and though the audience did not gain much information from the subtle disputants who now displayed their talents, yet were they tolerably entertained by the eloquence of one, the strong voice and clear pronunciation of another, the paradoxical conceits of a third, and the singular grimaces with

which a fourth delivered his distinctions and proofs. After this farce had lasted some time, and two thirds of the audience were seized with an uncivil fit of yawning, *Dionysius* said, since he had the happiness of having in his palace a few days past one of the most worthy scholars of the great *Plato*, so he begged of him to be convinced that the fame which had gone before him every where, had removed the veil which his modesty endeavoured to throw over his merits, and had discovered to him in the beautiful *Agathon* one of the most eloquent philosophers of his time; that he ought not therefore to scruple shewing himself in this advantageous light at *Syracuse* likewise, nor decline entering into a dispute with the philosophers of his Academy, upon some interesting question in philosophy. *Dionysius* who liked to listen to himself, and possessed the gift of prolixity in a high degree, fortunately spoke long enough to give our hero time to re-

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cover from the little surprize into which this unexpected request had thrown him: he therefore answered without hesitation, that he had been called too early from the auditory of the sages at the *Forum* at *Athens*, and engaged too soon in the affairs of a people, who as it was well known gave no little trouble to the administrators of their republic, to have had sufficient time to profit by the instructions of his teacher; yet that he was ready, out of regard to *Dionysius*, if he desired it, to shew how little he deserved the praise that had been bestowed upon him out of too great a partiality in his favour.

*Dionysius* therefore called upon *Philistus*, whether by chance, or according to some preconcerted plan, is not known, though the latter of these conjectures does not seem probable. He called upon him however to propose a question, for and against which both parties were to speak. This statesman meditated a little while,

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and in hopes of embarrassing *Agathon*, whom he began to be afraid of, proposed the following question—Which form of government made a state most happy, the republican, or the monarchic? — The choice, thought he, will be left to *Agathon* for which of these he will declare himself; if he speaks in favour of a republic, and speaks well, which he is obliged to do for the sake of his reputation, he will then displease the Prince; if he turns his discourse in praise of monarchy, he will then become odious to the people; and *Dionysius* will not have the courage to commit the administration of the state to a foreigner, who at his first appearance will have made so unfavourable an impression on the minds of the Syracusans; but in this instance the artful man was deceived in his expectations. *Agathon*, notwithstanding he noticed the design of *Philistus*, declared himself with a boldness, which did not forebode any triumph to his antagonist

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in favour of monarchy ; and when his opponents, (among whom *Antisthenes* and the Sophist *Protagoras* exerted their utmost efforts to enhance the advantages of a free state) had done speaking, he began with setting their own principles in a stronger light than they themselves had been capable of doing. The attention was amazing ; every man was more curious to hear how *Agathon* would answer himself, than how he would refute his antagonists. His eloquence soared to a height which astonished the minds of his auditory ; the importance of the moment which determined the fate of all his enterprize, the dignity of the object, the desire of triumphing, and probably also the settled aversion to democracy which had been rooted in his mind since his banishment from *Athens* ; all these circumstances filled him with an inspiration which dilated the powers of his soul. His ideas were so great, his pictures drawn with such strength, and coloured with so much

much spirit, his arguments, when considered separately so convincing, and in their arrangement throwing so much light upon each other; the fluency of his speech, which at first gliding on in tranquil majesty, became gradually so powerful and irresistible, that the very persons who had previously determined that he must be in the wrong, were compelled as by a magic power inwardly to give him their approbation. It seemed as if *Mercury* or *Apollo* were speaking; the connoisseurs (for there were some present who might pass for such) were particularly astonished at his contempt of those artifices by which the Sophists were accustomed to give to a bad cause the appearance of a good one,—that he borrowed no colourings which by their splendour must conceal the illusion of false or precarious positions; no artful dispositions of light and shade. His expression was like the light of the sun, whose lively and almost spiritual brightness imparts itself

itself to objects, without depriving them in any degree of their proper form and colours.

It must however be owned, that he bore rather hard upon republics. He proved, or seemed to prove to all who heard him, that this kind of community derived it's origin from the wild chaos of anarchy; and that the wisdom of their legislators had been attended with very little success in their attempts to introduce order and consistency into a system of government, which being by it's nature in a constant agitation and internal ferment, was every instant in danger of being demolished by it's own strength; and which was so little capable of tranquillity, that such a state was rather the consequence of the utmost decay, and like a total calm at sea, the certain foreboder of a destructive storm. He shewed that the virtue, that consecrated palladium of free states, in the preservation of which their legislators had placed all the happiness of those

those states, was a kind of invisible idol deified by antient superstition, the name of which was alone revered ; that in such states men seemed to have entered into a tacit convention of suffering themselves to be deceived by the title and a certain phantom of integrity, moderation, disinterestedness, love of one's country, and of the public good ; and that under the mask of this political hypocrisy, under the respectable appearance of all these virtues, the very opposite to them could not be practised anywhere in a more shameless manner. It would require, he said, a variety of particular circumstances, which in the course of several thousand years would scarce ever be found to occur in any one spot upon the face of the earth, in order to maintain a republic in that state of mediocrity, without which it could not have any stability. That this circumstance being so rarely to be met with, and depending on so many accidental causes, was the reason why most

most republics were either too feeble to afford the least security to their citizens, or that they aspired to a greatness, which after a series of dissensions, cabals, conspiracies and civil wars, at length occasioned the destruction of the state; and left nothing for those who remained masters of the field of battle, but to people deserts and build up ruins again. That even in regard to liberty, to which these states formed such exclusive pretensions, it was almost as likely to be found in the despotic empire of *Afia*; because the people must either yield an abject submission to all that was resolved or executed by the nobles and the wealthy in favour of their particular interests; or if the people were themselves the legislators and arbiters, no honest man could be secure, that he should not the next day become a sacrifice to those who might consider his merits as an obstacle in their way, or might have expected to become richer and greater through his credit and

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authority. There was no other kind of state in which it was less allowable to make use of one's abilities, to think for one's self, and to acquire with impunity a knowledge of what was considered as most conducive to the public good, in matters of importance. All plans for improvement were rejected under the odious title of innovations, and exposed the contrivers of them to secret or open persecutions: even those pillars of human felicity, truth, virtue, science, and the amiable arts of the Muses, those advantages which properly distinguish the civilized man from the savage, were either suspected or utterly abhorred in these states; they were either invalidated by a variety of dark insinuating methods, obstructed in their progress, or certainly neither encouraged nor rewarded; and condemned merely to support the reigning prejudices and abuses.—

BUT enough!—we have too many reasons—if it were only because we have  
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the honour of living in the midst of a nation, the government of which is itself republican, and is in reality the most admirable kind of republic ever seen on the face of the earth,—we have too many reasons, I say, to think more favourably of free states, to be able to give an extract of a discourse so prejudicial to their credit without reluctance. For this very reason, instead of copying *Agathon's* speech at full length from our original, we have contented ourselves with quoting some parts of it as a sketch, though a very imperfect one, of the whole. Far be it ever from us, to make the situation of any man living more disagreeable to him than it may already be; or to give occasion, that the customs of a Grecian republic long since demolished, from whence *Agathon* drew his picture, should be misconstrued into a defamation of those which in modern times may be considered as respectable free states, the asylums of virtue, of sound reason, of public

lic happiness, and of a political equality, which approaches as near as possible to that of nature. As for the rest, according to our opinion, which we give without meaning to offend, the point here in dispute may be reckoned among those important questions — whether Scaramouch or Scapin is the best dancer—and among other questions of the same kind (though of greater consequence) upon which, down to the present period, so much time and trouble—to say nothing of paper, pens and ink—has been lost, without our being able to discover how, by what means, or how much the world could ever have been improved by the solution of them. We could justify this opinion of ours, but it is unnecessary; every one is at liberty to think as he pleases, without being called to an account for it by us; *hanc veniam petimus, damusque vicissim*; for in fact, a book would never be at an end, if an author was obliged to prove all he says, and

justify

justify himself upon every particular. We also pass over, for another reason, which we leave to be guessed by the lovers of enigma's and rebusses, *Agathon's* discourse in praise of a monarchical government. The sovereigns of the world (*Philistus* would justly have said, for I would have done so in his place) are generally very indifferent about the opinion which is entertained of their government —There are cases, we confess, which furnish an exception—but these occur very seldom, if care is but taken to keep an hundred and fifty thousand soldiers well armed always in readiness, with the assistance of which a man may reasonably hope to be able to get the better of the opinion of all peaceable persons in the world. Are not these hundred and fifty thousand men—or if there are more of them so much the better!—a living, an evident, even the best proof, a proof which makes all others unnecessary, that a nation will be made happy?—It is therefore

therefore sufficient (and this circumstance alone belongs essentially to our history) that this speech in which *Agathon* set forth all the defects of corrupted free states, and all the advantages of well governed monarchies in two contrasted pictures, had the good fortune to be unanimously approved of, to persuade all his hearers, and make the orator admired in a manner that would have satisfied the pride of the vainest Sophist. Every one was in raptures with a man, who united such rare qualifications to so noble a turn of thinking and such humane sentiments; for *Agathon* had not spoken in praise of tyranny, but of the government of a father who educates his children well, and endeavours to make them happy. Every one reflected within himself, what golden days *Sicily* would enjoy, if such a man would undertake the conduct of the state. He had not omitted, in the beginning of his discourse, to remove all suspicion of his having depreciated republics, from a prin-

principle of revenge, and extolled monarchy, from flattery or secret views. He had taken occasion to declare, that he was resolved to go to *Tarentum*, that there, in the tranquil obscurity of a private station, which from inclination he preferred to any other, he might employ himself in the investigation of truth, and the improvement of his mind—(Expressions, which in our days would appear singular and ridiculous, but at that time had not yet lost all their meaning and dignity.) Every man blamed or regretted this resolution, and wished that *Dionysius* would exert all his efforts to dissuade him from it. The inclination of the Prince, and the wishes of the people, had never agreed so well as on this occasion. The strong attachment he had to our Hero, and the great opinion he entertained of his abilities, was raised to the highest degree by this oration. However unsteady the character of *Dionysius* was, yet there were moments in which he wished, that  
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it might cost him less self-denial to become a good Prince. *Agathon's* eloquence had convinced him, as well as the rest of the audience. He was sensible of the beauty of his pictures, and forgot at the same time, that those very pictures contained a kind of satyre upon himself. He proposed to accomplish all that *Agathon* had figuratively promised of his government, and that he might facilitate to himself those duties which such a design required, he was determined to have them executed by a man who was capable of talking of them so well. How could he find out a properer method of making the Syracusans attached to his government? Where could he find a man in whom so many agreeable and useful qualities were combined?—It was a rule with *Dionysius*, as we have already observed, to leave as little time as possible between his resolutions and the execution of them. What he had once desired, he desired with eagerness and impatience; for as long as he

he saw things only in one view; and on this occasion he disclosed himself to *Aristippus* alone, who did not omit any circumstance that would strengthen him in his design. This philosopher was therefore commissioned to make proposals to *Aga-thon*. Our Hero excused himself upon the principle of his aversion to a life of business, and fixed the day for his departure. *Dionysius* grew more urgent. *Aga-thon* still persisted in his refusal; but in so modest a manner, that it was hoped he would suffer himself to be persuaded. In fact it was only his intention to put the attachment of so unsteady a Prince to some proof, before he would enter into any engagements, which might be attended with such good or such bad consequences for the happiness of others, or for his own repose.

At last, when he thought that the esteem he had acquired with the tyrant, was something more than a caprice, he yielded to his importunities; but not

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without some conditions which were to be granted by *Dionysius*. He declared, that he would remain at his court only upon the footing of his friend, as long as *Dionysius* should acknowledge him as such, and should think his service necessary; but he would not suffer himself to be confined, and would reserve the liberty of retiring as soon as he should perceive that his presence was of no farther use. The only reward he thought himself entitled to demand for his services, was this; that *Dionysius* would follow his advice, as long as he could prove that it would tend equally to promote the good of the nation, and the security, fame and private happiness of the Prince. He concluded with requesting that *Dionysius* would never listen to any secret insinuations or accusations against him, without discovering them frankly to him, and attending to his answer.

*Dionysius* made the less scruple of agreeing to all these conditions, as he was determined

termined to employ *Agathon*, even if it should have cost him one half of his kingdom. *Agathon* therefore took possession of the apartment which had been prepared for him at the palace with the utmost magnificence. *Dionysius* declared publicly, that his friend *Agathon* might be applied to in all circumstances as himself; the courtiers vied with each other, which of them could shew the new favourite his submission in the most servile manner; and *Syracuse* saw with joyful expectation, the return of the Saturnian age.

HERE we make a little pause, to allow the reader time to consider what he may have to say to himself at this instant in favour or in prejudice of our Hero. Probably some may be displeased at the zeal, with which, from an hatred to his ungrateful country, he had spoken against Republics in general; while others perhaps may censure his whole conduct, since his residence at the court of *Dionysius*,

thus, as being regulated by an artful prude, which gives him an appearance of flyness, inconsistent with his natural character. We have already declared several times that in this work we have undertaken the task of an historian, not of an apologist; but we are still at liberty to judge as freely according to our notions, as our readers may according to their's, of the actions of a man, whose life, though we do not propose it entirely as a pattern, is yet intended as an instructive example. In regard to the first point, we have already mentioned, that it would be unjust to consider what *Agathon* spoke against the republics of this time, as a general reflection upon all such free States, which he certainly never intended. States, which (as he had acknowledged it to be possible) by the concurrence of favourable circumstances, by the very nature of their constitution, equally secured from the envy of their neighbours, as from extravagant thoughts  
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of becoming great, might subsist for a long time in a happy mediocrity, and scarce know even by name those defects, which *Agathon* looked upon as irremediable in the Republics of his time. Whether he did too great an injury to these last mentioned Republics, we leave to be determined by those who are acquainted with the particulars of their history. If the consciousness of the injustice, he himself had experienced from the Athenians, seemed to mix a little gall with his censure, we intreat our readers (not for the love of *Agathon*, for how can their opinion of him be either lessened or raised by this circumstance ?) to put themselves in his place, and ask what esteem they could have for a native country, which had treated them so ill ? Let them remember, that in general only a trifling offence against their vanity, is sufficient to change their esteem for any person into contempt, their love into aversion, their praises into calumnies, and

their good services into persecutions. How often, for reasons of no consequence has your opinion of men and things been totally altered ?—Answer yourselves in as low a voice as you please ; for we desire not to hear any thing of it ; and if, after this little retrospect upon yourselves, you cannot forgive our Hero, for not loving a native country, that had done every thing to make herself odious to him,—then must we indeed admire the force of your morals ; but—we must at the same time confess, we should admire those morals still more, if they could persuade you to have more indulgence for others, till they had taught you to have less partiality for yourselves.

UPON the whole, we have reason to believe that *Agathon* spoke as he thought, and this is sufficient to justify his sincerity. And why should we begin to doubt of this ? His whole behaviour, during the time that he was in possession of the tyrant's favour, proves, that he had

had no designs which could induce him to flatter *Dionysius* contrary to his opinion. It is true, he had designs in all he did from the moment he entered the Palace ; ought he then to have had none ? What can we, in the utmost severity require more, than that his designs should be noble and virtuous ; and that they were so, we have already seen. It does not therefore appear, that there is any reason to reproach him for the prudence, by which, in the new slippery situation he was in, it was necessary all his actions should be directed, in order to the completion of his views. We grant, that he shewed a kind of reserve and subtlety on this occasion, which seems not entirely consistent with his former character. But this in itself is not blameable. It is not yet decided, whether this perseverance in the same way of thinking, and in the same line of conduct, in which many honest people pride themselves so much, is so great

a virtue as they may perhaps imagine. Vanity, indeed, readily persuade us, that we are best as we are; but it has no right to flatter us in this manner. It is impossible, while every thing about us is changing, that we alone should be immutable; and if it were not impossible, yet would it be improper. Different times require different manners; different circumstances, different designs and turns of conduct. In moral romances indeed, we find heroes, who ever remain the same in all situations—and are to be commended for it;—for how can it be otherwise, since in their twentieth year they already possess wisdom and virtue in a degree of perfection, which a *Socrates*, or an *Epaminondas* had scarce attained at the age of sixty after repeated amendments of themselves? But in life we find it otherwise. So much the worse for those, who always continue the same.—We speak not of the foolish and vicious;—the best of us have an infinite deal

deal to alter in our ideas, opinions, feelings, even in what we are most excellent, in our hearts, and in our virtue. And experience teaches us, that we seldom attain to a new turn of character, or to any remarkable amendment of our former internal situation, without passing through a kind of *medium*, which reflects a false colour upon us, and for a considerable time conceals our real form. We have already seen our Hero in a variety of situations; and in each, by the influence of circumstances, rather different from what he really is. At *Delphos* he seemed a mere speculative enthusiast; but it was afterwards seen, that he knew how to act with propriety. We imagined when he had mortified the beautiful *Cyane*, that he was inaccessible to the seductions of sensual pleasure; and *Danae* shewed us that we were deceived; it will not be long before another pretended *Danae*, who may imagine that she has discovered the weak side.

sive of his heart, will find herself as much deceived as we were. He appeared to be alternately a devout enthusiast, a Platonist, a Republican, a Hero, a Stoic, a Voluptuary; yet was he neither of all these, though at different times he passed through these several changes, and received a shade from each of them. Things may perhaps continue thus for a considerable time;—but as to his real character, as to those essential properties of it, which he still retained under all those forms; as to these, and as to what may remain of them, when every thing foreign and heterogeneous, shall by the whole series of his adventures have been separated from them,—of this we cannot speak at present. Without judging therefore so precipitately of him, as we are used every instant to do in common life,—we will continue to observe him, to discover as accurately as possible the true springs of his actions.

tions, not to suffer any secret emotion of his heart, which may give us the least insight into them, to escape our notice, and suspend our judgment upon the whole of his moral character, till—we become acquainted with it.

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